MAN, MYTH & MAGIC

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology, Religion and the Unknown

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VOLUME 16

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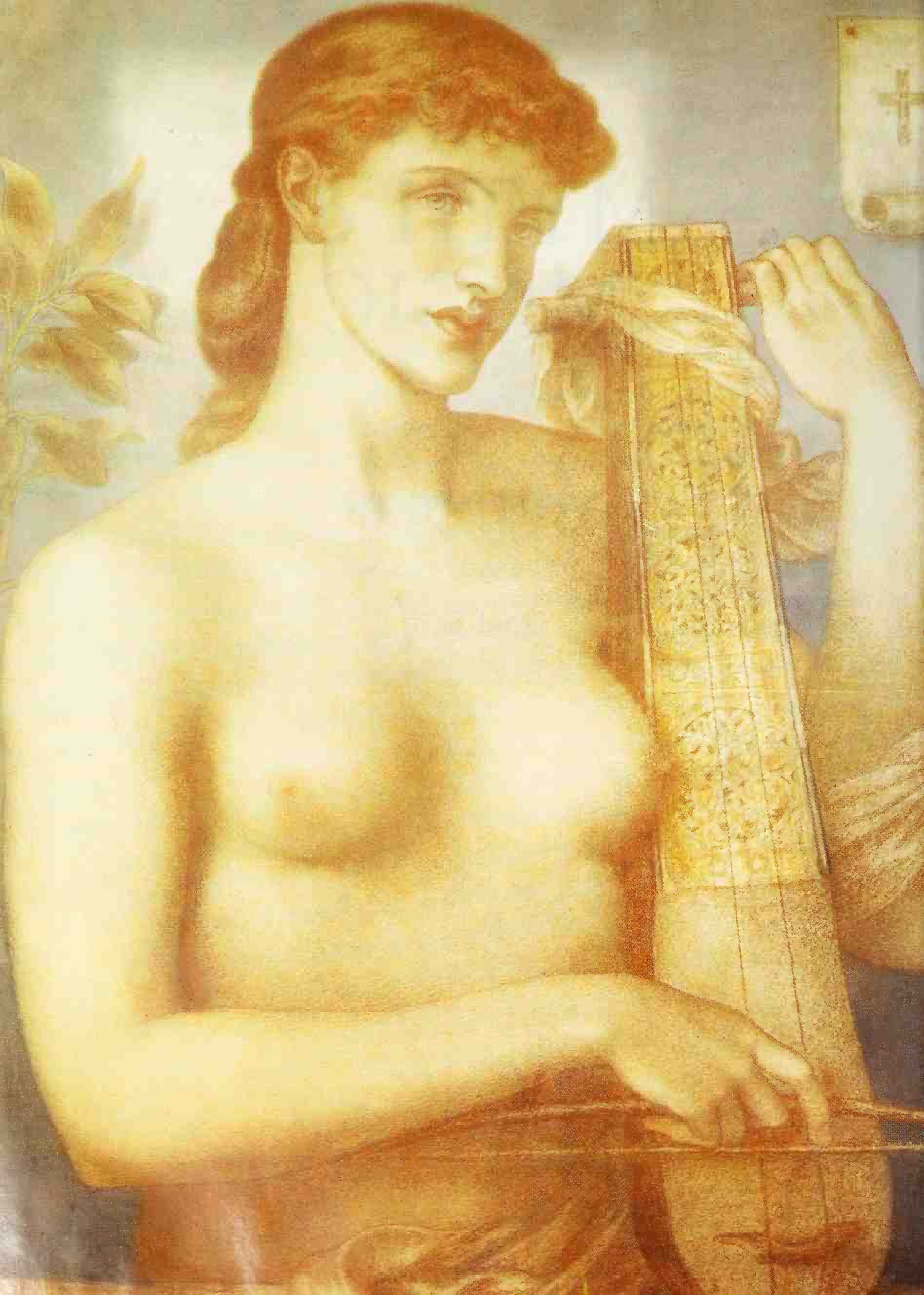

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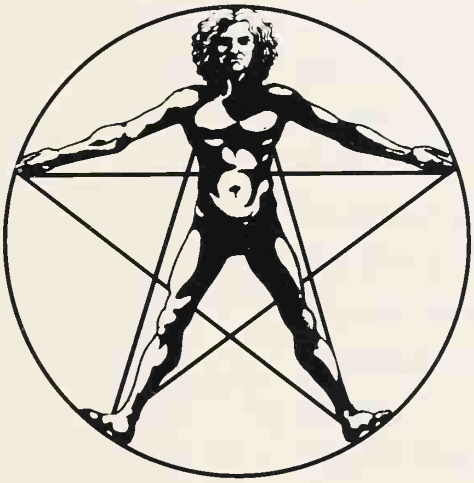

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology, Religion and the Unknown

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Richard Cavendish

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Professor E. R. Dodds; Professor Mircea Eliade;
William Sargant; John Symonds;
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Richard Cavendish and Brian Innes

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RASTAFARIANS

AFRICAN RELIGIONS migrated to the Caribbean with the slaves who were shipped across the Atlantic to work the plantations, and blended with the Christianity they were taught by their white masters (see VOODOO). The Rastafarian cult of Jamaica, however, has a different link with Africa, of more recent origin. It is not Christian, but prefers the Old Testament to the New, and has a strong political slant.

Rastafarianism was a product of black resentment of white domination and looked to Africa for release. The fascination with Ethiopia has been traced back to the 18th century and was fuelled by such Bible verses as Psalms 68.31: 'Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.' A Baptist Ethiopian Church was founded in Jamaica as long ago as 1784, but the black Jamaican leader Marcus Garvey (1887-1940) is revered by Rastafarians today as their most important latter-day prophet.

He was born at St Ann's Bay, worked as a printer in Jamaica and edited newspapers in Costa Rica and Panama. Convinced of his mission as a leader of his people, he founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association in Jamaica in 1914. He intended it to be a worldwide force for black pride and advancement, and in 1916 he moved to New York to gain suppport from American blacks. He founded a black weekly newspaper, *The Negro World*, the Black Star shipping line and other black enterprises.

In New York he also founded an African Orthodox Church, with Greek Orthodox links. His impassioned oratory gained him a following of millions but, although honest and genuine, he was not a competent businessman. His enterprises failed and in 1923 he was sentenced to prison for fraud. He was deported from the United States to Jamaica in 1927.

The God of Ethiopia

Garvey proclaimed that civilization had flowered in Africa – in Egypt, Ethiopia and Timbuctoo – when Europe was still inhabited by savages. Black people should look to Africa for their deliverance. The aim, he said, was 'to lay down our burden and rest our weary backs and feet by the banks of the Niger and sing our songs and chant our hymns to the God of Ethiopia.' He told his followers, 'Look to Africa for the crowning of a Black King; he shall be the Redeemer.' In 1930 the crown prince of Ethiopia, whose title was Ras Tafari, succeeded to his ancestral throne as the Emperor Haile Selassie (see ETHIOPIA). There were those in Jamaica who saw this as the fulfilment of Garvey's words and who expected the prophesied time of deliverance to be drawing near. Groups formed under various leaders, naming themselves Rastafarians.

A notable leader was Leonard Howell, one of the few Rastafarians who had actually been to Africa and who spoke a number of African languages. Harrassed by the government, he lived in the hills of Jamaica like an independent chief with hundreds of followers and, it was said, 13 wives. The Rastafarian use of *ganja* (marijuana) probably developed in this community, which was called Pinnacle. It was Howell who formulated the fundamental principles of the movement, which were to remain unaltered until the 1950s. These identified Haile Selassie as 'the living God and Emperor of the World' and Ethiopia as heaven, identified blacks as reincarnations of the Israelites of the Old Testament, pronounced that black men were superior to white men and would soon rule the world and avenge themselves on the whites, and predicted that Haile Selassie would arrange for blacks to return to their homeland in Ethiopia.

By the 1960s these principles had been boiled down to the belief in Ras Tafari as the living God and the conviction that black salvation depended upon repatriation to Africa, though many Rastafarians today are not persuaded of the second point, or accept it only in a spiritual sense. The more militant groups believe in black power and the 'Africanization' of Jamaica. Howell told his followers to grow their hair in the 'dreadlocks' which became a badge of the more extreme Rastafarians and which were intended to identify them with the Israelite warriors of the Old Testament. He eventually identified himself as God and in 1960 he had to be taken to the mental hospital in Kingston, where he is assumed to have died.

The 1950s and 1960s saw fierce conflicts between the Jamaican government and militant Rastafarians. In 1959 thousands of Rastafarians readied themelves for departure to Ethiopia, but the planes and ships which they thought they had been promised failed to appear. Great excitement was created when Haile Selassie visited Jamaica in 1966 and the majestic Rastafarian prophet Martimmo Planno greeted him with a host of thousands at the airport and roundly declared, 'God has come!'

Before the plane landed it was raining, and Rastafarians in the crowd said, 'as soon as our God comes, the rain will stop.' Which it duly did. But the Lion of Judah failed to promise the repatriation to Ethiopia which Rastafarian leaders hoped for. In 1968 the Ethiopian Orthodox Church established a mission in Jamaica, only cautiously welcomed by Rastafarians, who mistrusted its Christianity. The reports of Haile Selassie's death in 1975 shocked his followers, but most decided that he either had not really died or had rematerialized in another form. The movement remained strong.

Ganja and Reggae

By this time Rastafarianism had established a firm footing among Jamaican immigrants to both Britain and the US. It is not a unified movement, but consists of numerous small, independent groups, varying considerably in their beliefs, their degree of militancy and their political involvement.

The cult has had a powerful influence on West Indian popular culture, art, poetry and music. Reggae, in particular, is closely linked with it and the lyrics of many reggae songs salute Ras Tafari, Marcus Garvey and other black heroes, freedom – and ganja, the 'holy herb' which liberates the black mind from the European cultural influences that hold it in chains, to enable it to explore its true identity. The dreadlocked singer Bob Marley became a hero for Rastafarians, many of whom regarded him as a reincarnation of Marcus Garvey. His early death in 1981 was deeply mourned and thousands attended his funeral, conducted according to the rites of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. (See also MESSIANIC MOVEMENTS.)

FURTHER READING: L.E. Barrett, *The Rastafarians: the Dreadlocks of Jamaica* (Heinemann, 1977); K.M. Williams, *The Rastafarians* (Ward Lock, 1981).

RAUDIVE VOICES

THE POSSIBILITY THAT communication with the dead might be made by some form of radio was first put forward by Thomas Edison in an interview he gave to *Scientific American* in 1920. Nearly another 40 years were to pass, however, before the Swedish artist Friedrich Jürgenson reported what appeared to be the first demonstration.

Jürgenson had taken a tape recorder into remote Swedish countryside to record birdsong and, on playing back the tape later, he heard, as well as the birdsong, faint voices that he identified as those of dead relatives and friends addressing him. A book that Jürgenson wrote subsequently attracted the attention of the eminent parapsychologist Dr Hans Bender, and also that of Dr Konstantin Raudive, former professor of psychology at Uppsala University. Both men carried out strictly controlled experiments, and were convinced that factory-clean tapes, run through a tape-recorder in a silent environment, could record the sound of human voices speaking intelligible words.

Raudive's book on his work attracted the attention of a British publisher, who subsequently brought out an English-language edition, under the title of *Breakthrough* (1971). Before publication, he set up a sophisticated series of experiments. Since it might be argued that the voices came from everyday radio broadcasts picked up by induction, some of the recordings were carried out inside a 'Faraday cage', providing a complete screen to all radio-frequency emissions. The experiments were supervised by electronics experts and recording engineers.

Over 200 voices are reported to have been heard on the tapes, some so clearly that they were intelligible to everyone present. The publisher's chairman was sure that he heard the voice of an old friend, the late pianist Artur Schnabel, and Dr Raudive was addressed by his childhood nickname.

Various hypotheses have been advanced to account for these 'Raudive voices'. The most attractive is that they are imprinted on the tape by some kind of involuntary psychokinesis on the part of the recipient; this would account for the voices speaking only in languages with which he is familiar.

ODILON REDON

BORN AT BORDEAUX in 1840, the French painter and graphic artist Odilon Redon was an exceptional man of visions and dreams, who stands out as an artist apart in a realistic age. He came to maturity at a time when others were developing the science of Impressionism but he was entirely out of sympathy with this effort to translate the external aspects of Nature into terms of colour. In a reference to the Impressionists he went so far as to describe them as 'the parasites of the object'.

Unduly prejudiced as he may now seem against a movement that produced paintings of great beauty, Redon was true to his own aims. He sought for, as he himself put it, 'all that uplifts the spirit into the realm of the mysterious, the disturbance of the unresolved... all the suggestion that art may give of the unexpected, the undefined or undefinable'. Eschewing colour, he conveyed these sensations in shadowed drawings and lithographs, his 'Blacks', that mainly occupied him until late middle age.

He is portrayed as a melancholy youth, tall, thin, pale, taking refuge from the rough impact of everyday life in the peaceful solitude of the family country house. It was a torture to him to study art for a while under the uncongenial auspices of the academic painter Gerôme. But he had other mentors who encouraged his individual bent.

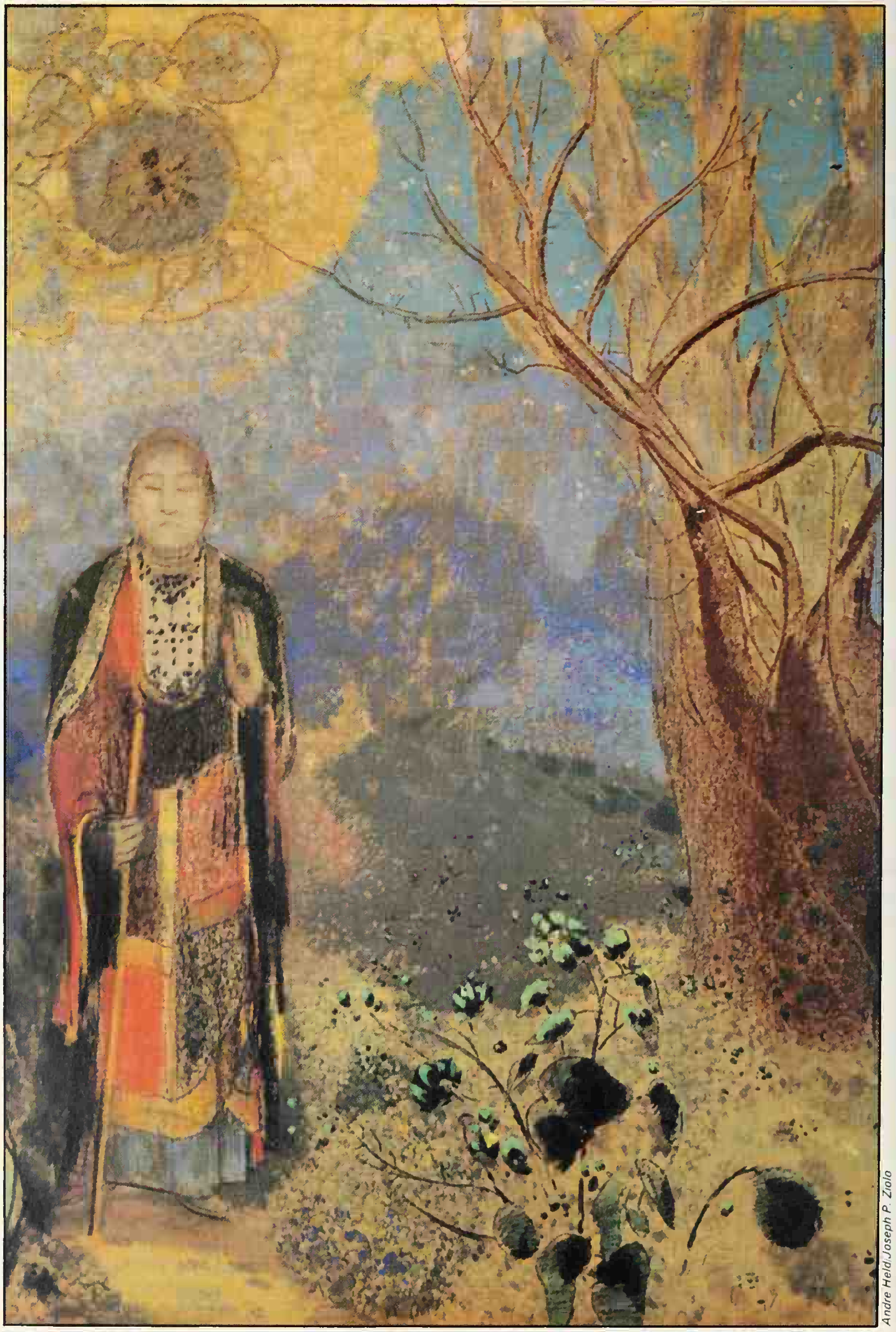
Stanislas Gorin, an artist in the Romantic tradition, aroused Redon's enthusiasm for Delacroix and Gustave Moreau. Friendship with the Bordeaux botanist Armand Clavaud, who investigated the relation between plant and animal life, caused him to regard this indeterminate frontier from an imaginative viewpoint. He saw the botanist's scientific research turned into fantasy in the paintings of another acquaintance, Roger Bresdin, who would convert the tendrils of a creeper into snakes and give birds and flowers human faces. Hindu poets, German philosophers, the tales of Edgar Allan Poe, the *Fleurs du Mal* of Baudelaire, all added esoteric influences.

Thus inspired, Redon produced the remarkable charcoal drawings and the lithographs published in albums at intervals in the 1870s and 1880s. They include such memorable conceptions as the spider with its wickedly alive compound of insect and human character that J.K. Huysmans described in his 'decadent' masterpiece *A Rebours* in 1884; the *Vision* (in the album *Dans le Rêve*), in which a huge eye floats balloon-like, upturned to the infinite; *The Masque of the Red Death*, a theme taken from Poe; and the symbolic and intensely mournful *Prisoner* (now in the Museum of Modern Art, New York), in which a figure taps feebly at the barred window of his cell.

Long ignored and solitary, Redon gained three devoted admirers in the 1880s: the journalist Emile Hennequin, who wrote of him as deserving, like Baudelaire, 'the superb eulogy of having created a new thrill'; Huysmans, who pictured him as a poet of Satanism and delirious fancy; and the poet Stephane Mallarmé, who probably best understood the artist's 'lucid despair'. As a result of growing interest Redon was encouraged to exhibit, and from 1890 onwards he abandoned the dusky monochrome which he had peopled with melancholy phantoms and turned to colour in oil painting and pastel.

The isolated dreamer now became an inspiring force to those who sought for new and imaginative expression. The English writer Arthur Symons, whose book *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* influenced the spread of Symbolism in England, described Redon as 'the French Blake'. The painter Maurice Denis, in his group portrait *Hommage a Cezanne,* placed him foremost. Yet Redon, never a man of 'movements', still pursued an independent course.

A new sense of emancipation and delight animates his work after the 1890s. He reverted to classical myth but not simply in order to illustrate its characters and episodes. His Pegasus and the Dragon is an energetic symbol of triumph over the powers of darkness. His Chariot of Apollo soars aloft in exultant movement and cascades of iridescent colour, towards the source of light. Living until 1916, a witness of the opening excitements of 20th-century art, he retained to the end his singular independence of vision. WILLIAM GAUNT*



Andre Held/Joseph P. Ziolo

Redon was described by one admirer as deserving 'the superb eulogy of having created a new thrill', and by another as a poet of Satanism and delirious fancy: *The Buddha*, c 1906

REFLEXOLOGY

PART OF THE NEW AGE holistic approach to health, reflexology has its roots in ancient Chinese practice. Something like it is reputed to have appeared in Europe in the work of the physician Adamus in 1582, but the modern founder of the system was Dr William Fitzgerald, an American, who initiated research into what his student, Dr Edwin Bowers, called 'zone therapy' in Vienna in 1913.

Reflexology is based on the theory that the body can be divided into ten zones, five on each side, with energy lines connecting the five toes with the five fingers on the same side of the body, and the top of the scalp on the same side. The feet and the hands are thus considered to be microcosmic 'maps' of the body. Fitzgerald found that by applying pressure, or deep massage, to the appropriate part of the foot or hand, a therapeutic effect could be obtained on the corresponding part of the body. He also identified corresponding points on the tongue and ear, but these are not exploited much by modern reflexologists.

The technique, as it is taught today, was pioneered by Eunice Ingham, and concentrates primarily on the soles of the feet. Reflexology diagrams identify various organs of the body mirrored in miniature on the feet, mainly the soles, but also to a lesser extent on the top surfaces and sides of the feet as far up as the ankle.

The right foot corresponds to the right side of the body, while the left foot corresponds to the left side of the body. Some organs, like the liver, are only reflected in one foot, in this case the right foot. The feet are divided by reflexologists into the ten basic zones, each zone or path running from one bodily extremity to the other, from the tips of the toes to the finger tips.

Energy is supposed to flow along these paths, the organs or parts of the body that this path passes being affected by the quality of this energy. Bodily disfunction or imbalance can change the quality of this energy, while stimulation of the appropriate zone in the extremities, particularly the feet, is thought to improve the quality or balance of that particular energy flow, with a consequent improvement in the health of the affected organ. Elaborate diagrams chart these correspondences.

As in the Chinese therapeutic arts of acupuncture and acupressure (see ACUPUNCTURE), these flows of energy, and their paths, also known as meridians, are not susceptible to investigative proof or anatomical dissection. Their existence is inferred by the observed results of stimulating the zones on the hands and feet (in the case of reflexology) or the meridians at specified points (in the case of acupuncture and acupressure). While many points on the body are subjected to pressure by practitioners of acupressure, for the reflexologist the points to be deeply massaged are well-defined zones on the soles of the feet.

The pressure can be applied by the fingers to very specific spots, but the thumb is most usually used. A general reflexology treatment will often start with the centre of the pad of the big toe, which zone is supposed to stimulate the pituitary gland. The massage then progresses to each reflex zone in turn, stimulating the energy flow. The therapist may then concentrate on any which relate to current health problems or which seem to indicate an energy imbalance.

One commonly observed phenomenon is that stimulation of the wrong zones sometimes appears to precipitate a cold or similar minor illness in the patient soon after treatment. Patients are usually recommended to follow a regular course of treatment, over several months, while in the East reflexology is often used as a regular form of preventative medicine.

Some of the zones on the soles of the feet are quite large, such as the zone which covers most of the instep and which corresponds to the small intestine. The outer edge of the instep and a zone partly encircling the instep roughly corresponds with the colon. Reflexologists attribute the outer edge of the instep of the right foot to the ascending colon (including the appendix), while the same position on the left foot is attributed to the descending colon. Other areas are much more localised. It is believed, for example, that massaging the undersides of the small toes will result in an improved energy flow to the sinuses, resulting in a clearing of the head.

Some zones or reflex areas are quite small and need to be precisely located by the reflexology therapist for the desired effect to occur. For example, the 'upper lymph area', ascribed to the lymph glands, is a zone located on the web of skin between the first and second toes, and it is smaller in size than the tip on the small finger.

Below the big toe and moving towards the heel is an area attributed by reflexologists to the thyroid area. Adjacent to this, across the foot, is an area attributed to the lungs. It is obvious that stimulation of these areas will, if the theory is correct, result in entirely different effects. The skill of the practitioner lies in determining the correct zone and applying just the right sort of pressure for the correct length of time.

Reflexology is reputed to work best with functional disorders such as stress-related conditions, headache, backache or constipation. It does not claim to treat major conditions, but can be generally beneficial in the same way that a whole body massage has a relaxing effect. It also has the advantage that it can, to an extent, be self-applied.

Other specific areas include the base of the big toe for stiffness of the atlas, or neck vertebrae, with lower back pain reputedly responding to the corresponding massage of the inner border of the foot, about two inches up from the heel. Headaches are said to yield to massage of the top of the big toe on both feet.

Apart from the claimed curative effects that flow from the stimulation of zones on their distant but corresponding organs, reflexologists claim to be able to diagnose problems from studying these zones. As in iridology (see IRIDOLOGY), reflexologists claim that adverse health conditions will show up in the foot zones before they manifest fully in the organ concerned.

If a particular zone of the foot is tender to the touch, or aches painfully, or alternatively is insensitive when pressed by the therapist, this may indicate a current or incipient adverse health condition in the corresponding organ. STEPHEN SKINNER

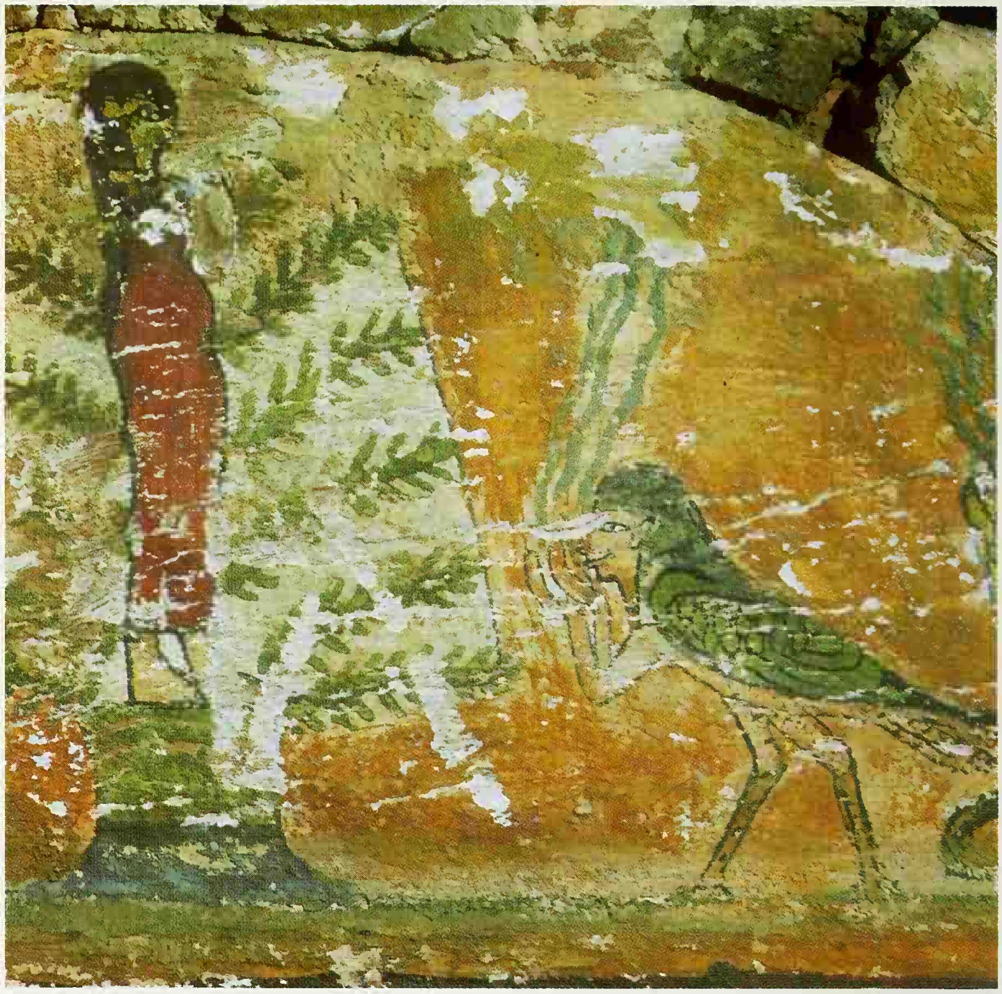
FURTHER READING: Doreen E. Bayly, *Reflexology Today*, (Thorsons, 1982); Anya Gore, *Reflexology*, (Macdonald Optima, 1990); Nicola M. Hall, *Reflexology: a Patient's Guide*, (Thorsons, 1986); Eunice Ingham, *Stories the Feet Can Tell*, (Ingham Publishing, 1959).

REFRIGERIUM

A LATIN WORD meaning 'refreshment', *refrigerium* was adopted by early Latin-speaking Christians to describe the hoped-for bliss that would reward the faithful after death. The term implies a concept of the afterlife in which refreshing coolness was regarded as a most desirable thing. As used in Christian texts, a reference is often implied to the parable of Dives and Lazarus, the rich man and the beggar (Luke, chapter 16). For after death the rich man implores Abraham to send Lazarus 'to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame'. Dives seeks this refreshment because he is in a fiery hell – a fate that he deserved for his former way of life. But the idea of the dead in need of cool water is far older than Christianity.

As far back as the Pyramid Texts (c 2400 BC), the dead pharaohs were assured that libations of water would be made for them. In subsequent Egyptian tomb-paintings, and in the vignettes of the Book of the Dead, the deceased is frequently depicted receiving draughts of water, often from a goddess. And in the Hellenistic period inscriptions abound with formulas such as 'May Osiris give thee cool water'. But the most significant of all is doubtless this inscription, about 46 BC, in which a dead woman addresses her husband from the tomb: 'The living water which the earth hath for its dwellers is stagnant water for me... I no longer know where I am, now that I have arrived in this valley [of the dead]. Would that I had water to drink from a running stream and one to say to me, "Remove not thy pitcher from the stream!" O that my face were turned towards the north wind on the river bank that the coolness thereof might quiet the anguish of my heart! '

This belief that the dead crave for fresh water and cool breezes also found expression in ancient Mesopotamia. In the famous Epic of Gilgamesh (see GILGAMESH) it is said of the dead that 'dust is their food and clay their sustenance', and they long for offerings of water to be made to them by their surviving relatives. The evidence of tombs often reveals the provision made to convey liquid offering to the dead: for example, in



The belief that the dead were parched and in need of cool water was natural in dry, hot lands: Egyptian coffin painting, c 200 BC, showing a soul in the form of a bird with a human head, receiving water from a tree goddess

Michael Holford/British Museum

the ancient Canaanite city of Ugarit (now Ras Shamra) many graves were equipped with pipes leading down from ground level.

That the dead should be regarded as parched and in need of cool water is an idea that naturally occurred in the dry hot lands of the Near East. And the image of a celestial stream or fountain of refreshing, life-giving water, which appears in many of the ancient religions of this area, found dramatic expression in the culminating vision of John in the book of Revelation (chapter 22): 'Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb... The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come"... And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price.'

The words *refrigerare* and *refrigerium* abound in early Christian funerary inscriptions and liturgical formulas, expressing the intuitions of a faith that had its roots in the hot Mediterranean lands. This southern aspiration for an eternal state of refreshing coolness contrasts notably with the view of the northern barbarians, who imagined Valhalla as a hall, brightly lighted and closed against cold and damp, where dead heroes warmed themselves by drinking the intoxicating liquor that flowed from the goat Heidrun (see ODIN; SCANDINAVIA).

ISRAEL REGARDIE

IN OCTOBER 1928 the 20-year-old Israel Regardie – later to be referred to by his employer as 'the Serpent' – was invited by Aleister Crowley to join him in Paris and be his secretary. Some two years before, the teenage Regardie had attended a meeting in Washington, DC, where an extract from Crowley's *Part I of Book IV* (a fragment on Yoga practices) had been read, and as a consequence he had written to Crowley (the Beast) through one of his publishers.

It was some months before Crowley replied, and then it was to suggest that Regardie should contact the Beast's wealthy disciple, Karl Germer (Brother Saturnus) in New York. This was to prove a significant encounter, for Germer sold Regardie a set of Crowley's publication *The Equinox*.

It was following a desultory correspondence over the next two years that Crowley suddenly proposed that Regardie should study with him in Paris. After less than six months, however, Crowley, Regardie and Crowley's current mistress, Marie de Miramar, were expelled from France, due largely to the fact that Regardie had failed to apply for a *carte de séjour* when his visa expired. The Beast contrived to stay on in the city, but de Miramar and Regardie took the boat-train for England. Despite the fact that Regardie had been born in London (his family having subsequently immigrated to the US), they were refused entry at Dover as 'undesirable aliens', and fetched up in Brussels. It was a further six months before Regardie was able to gain entry to Britain.

The association with the Beast lasted some three years, during which Regardie collaborated with P.R. Stephensen, publisher of several of Crowley's works, on *The Legend of Aleister Crowley* (1930). He then became for a time secretary to the writer Thomas Burke in London, and made the acquaintance of a number of leading British occultists, including Dion Fortune. He became a member of the Golden Dawn, taking as his motto *Ad Majorem Adonai Gloriam*. On his return to the United States in 1935, he created a minor sensation – and earned the gratitude of innumerable historians – by publishing, in four volumes, extensive details of the rituals and documents of the Order.

Crowley's reaction to this was to exclaim: 'Pure theft from *The Equinox*!' He was further irritated to receive a copy of one of Regardie's books with a friendly letter, and responded accordingly; Regardie replied with an insult – and the outcome was a scurrilous anonymous missive (but clearly the work of Crowley) which circulated for many years. It began:

> Israel Regudy was born in the neighbourhood of Mile End Road, in one of the vilest slums in London.. 'Regardie' is the blunder of a recruiting sergeant in Washington on the occasion of his brother enlisting in the United States Army... About the year 1924 he began to study the work of, and corresponded with, Mr Aleister Crowley. He put up so plausible an appeal that the latter gentleman paid his passage from America and accepted him as a regular student of Magick. Apart from his inferiority complex, he was found to be suffering from severe chronic constipation, and measures were taken to cure him of this and also his ingrained habit of onanism. The cure in the latter case was successful, but Regudy abused his freedom by going under some railway arches and acquiring an intractable gonorrhoea.

The letter continued in this vein, accusing Regardie of having insulted and stolen from Dion Fortune and other women.

It seems unlikely that the two ever spoke again. Regardie, who had learned a variety of healing techniques during his time in London, returned to the United States and set himself up as an osteopath and psychotherapist in Los Angeles. Although still deeply interested in magical practices, and the author of a number of books on occult subjects, he kept himself aloof from the burgeoning movements of the West Coast. In 1970 he published *The Eye in the Triangle*, 'an interpretation of Aleister Crowley'. (See also ALEISTER CROWLEY; DION FORTUNE; GOLDEN DAWN.)

FURTHER READING: Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 3rd edn (Hazel Hills Corp, 1970), *My Rosicrucian Adventure*, 2nd edn (Llwellyn, 1971) and *The Eye in the Triangle* (Llewellyn, 1970); John Symonds, *The Great Beast* (Macdonald, 1971).

REGRESSION

HYPNOTISM IS INCREASINGLY widely employed in the treatment of medical and psychological conditions, for the suppression of pain in dentistry and obstetrics, and to help patients give up smoking. Viewed with hostility by the orthodox medical establishment since its early days in the 18th century (see MESMER), hypnotism is slowly gaining respectability. One of its techniques, however, is highly controversial and is opposed by many hypnotherapists themselves. This is regression, which means sending patients under hypnosis back into their past lives, their childhoods or even, allegedly, their previous existences.

Suppose a patient has a phobia, whose root lies in an experience in the past, so stressful that he has never been able to deal with it. Indeed, the patient has driven it out of his conscious mind altogether and suppressed all memory of it, but from its buried lair in his unconscious mind the experience is still affecting him. Suppose that the frightening event occurred when he was four years old. Under hypnosis, he can be taken back in time until he becomes, in his mind at least, his four-year-old self. He can then remember and describe the suppressed experience. Once the memory of it has been brought back into consciousness, the patient can be helped to come to terms with it and the phobia can be dispelled.

Dredging for the Past

Such is the theory, at least, but there are serious misgivings about the technique. Some hypnotherapists use it to dredge up buried memories ostensibly welling up, not merely from different stages of childhood, but further back still, from the child's experience of being born or even from its still earlier stage as a foetus in the womb. One difficulty is that it is perfectly possible for patients to tell lies under hypnosis and, even when patients are not deliberately lying, their supposed 'memories' may be fabrications made in response to suggestions emanating consciously or unconsciously from the hypnotist. Patients under hypnosis are known to be intensely suggestible – indeed the fact that they are so suggestible is what makes them responsive to treatment under hypnosis – and they may pick up the tiniest hints from the hypnotist and serve up 'memories' to suit.

This does not, of course, mean that all memories dredged up under hypnosis are false, but only that it is unsafe to treat them as true without independent evidence. There have been cases of people remembering forgotten events from their childhood which were subsequently confirmed by other members of the family, and in the United States hypnosis has been used in crime investigation, in the hope of inducing witnesses to a crime to remember more of what they saw than had remained available to them in their conscious minds. In certain states, however, including New York, Pennsylvania and California, evidence obtained under hypnosis has now been ruled inadmissible in court. This followed investigations which showed that witnesses sometimes made up evidence under hypnosis and that, having made it up, they were firmly convinced, when they returned to normal consciousness, that the false evidence they had given was true.

From the point of view of practical hypnotherapy, it seems clear that a false memory of the past which the patient has made up under hypnosis, but which he subsequently accepts as true, can be just as helpful in dealing with his phobia or other mental problem as a memory that is genuine. The dangers of assuming that all accounts of the past gained through hypnotic regression are accurate, however, have become apparent in recent American cases where parents have been accused of child abuse years after the event and with no corroborating evidence.

Aliens in Recollection

One of the areas in which the regression technique has made a startling impact is Ufology, or the study of flying saucers (see UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS). Many of the stories of humans encountering saucer-borne aliens from distant planets have emerged under hypnosis, including the account given by Betty and Barney Hill to a Boston hypnotist in 1961, which created something of a sensation.

The Hills had been driving through the White Mountains in New Hampshire when they saw a big object, shaped like a pancake, descend from the sky. They could not remember what happened next, but they afterwards seemed to have lost two hours of time from their lives and they both began to suffer from thoroughly disturbing dreams. Under hypnosis they recalled being taken on board the spacecraft and medically examined by the crew, who were hairless beings with domed foreheads and slanting eyes. The aliens stood about five feet tall and came from a star named Zeta Reticuli.

The hypnotist did not believe that the Hills' accounts of their experience were true. He thought they were fantasizing, but their story was written up as a successful book and was later made into a film. Many subsequent tales of encounters with outer space beings have come out under hypnosis, which has not stopped enthusiasts from claiming them as convincing evidence.

Previous Lives

Stories of previous lives have also emerged from hypnotic regression sessions. Dr Edith Fiore, who was treating patients using age regression under hypnosis, was startled one day to hear the young man she was treating for serious sexual difficulties say, under hypnosis, when asked what he thought the root of his problems was, 'Two or three lifetimes ago I was a Catholic priest.' He went on to give a vivid and colourful account of his life as a priest in Italy in the 17th century. She knew the patient was a believer in reincarnation and dismissed his story as a fantasy, but she noticed that after this experience his sexual problems were resolved. Interested, she began putting other patients back into their 'previous lives', with impressive results. She came to the conclusion that whether there was any truth in their 'memories' of past existences on the earth, or whether they were sheer fantasy, was irrelevant to the beneficial effects which their memories or fantasies had on their problems in practice.

Arnall Bloxham, a well-known British hypnotherapist, tape-recorded hundreds of hours of regression memories of patients' past lives, most of which were remarkably humdrum, but a TV programme in the 1970s followed up one of his patients, referred to as 'Jane', who regressed to six previous lives. One of them found her living in Roman York in the 3rd century AD and in another she was Rebecca, a Jewish woman who was one of the victims of a massacre in the 12th century. In a third her name was Alison and she was a servant in a nobleman's household in France in the 15th century. She demonstrated a remarkably accurate and detailed knowledge of French history and art of that period, which it was difficult to account for, topped by her mentioning 'a golden apple' which was one of her master's prized possessions. It took extremely thorough research work in France to discover in a list of pieces that the real-life nobleman had owned 'a grenade of gold', meaning a golden object in the shape of an apple.

In 1985 a programme on British television followed up experiments by a hypnotherapist in Australia. A woman who regressed to a previous life in England in the 18th century remembered a cottage with an unusual pattern on the stone floor. She drew the pattern. In England the cottage was duly found. It had long been used as a henhouse, but when it was cleared out the pattern was revealed on the floor. Another woman remembered her life as a doctor in a town in Scotland in the early 1800s and recalled where the Seamen's Mission had stood. The local historians were taken aback to discover, after digging deep in their records, that she was right.

Most psychiatrists and therapists dismiss regressed recollections of past lives as fantasies, but some are not so sure. J.H. Brennan, for example, says that conducting regression experiments for thirty years has left him in no doubt that 'memories of past lives are almost universal...' and there are probably 'whole histories of past lives locked inside your skull'. They may all be works of fiction, and a good deal of what is unearthed certainly bears the stamp of fantasy, but sometimes the memories contain accurate historical information which the subject would not be likely to know. The objection from sceptics is that such information could have been picked up from history books or historical novels, films, lectures or conversations, subsequently forgotten and retained in the unconscious mind, but this objection is impossible to deal with since, by definition, we cannot know what is or is not in the unconscious.

(See also REINCARNATION.)

FURTHER READING: J.H. Brennan, *Understanding Reincarnation* (Penguin Books, 1990); R. Lever, *Hypnotherapy For Everyone* (Penguin Books, 1988).

WILHELM REICH

ALTHOUGH HIS PRODUCTIVE CAREER spanned forty years and stretched across a range of disciplines including sexology, medicine, psychiatry, biology, sociology, politics and ecology, Wilhelm Reich, born in Galicia in 1897, is probably best known for his formulation of the orgasm theory and for the discovery of 'orgone energy'.

The orgasm theory, an extension of Freudian psychoanalytic thought, states that the sexual orgasm functions to regulate the energy level in the organism and that inability to participate fully in a complete orgasm leaves an accumulation of undischarged energy in the body which then finds its expression in neurotic symptoms.

Two implications of this formulation were that Freudian libido is a bio-physical energy located in the body, and that psychoanalytic treatment should focus on undoing the behavioural blocks which interfere with orgasm instead of analysing the neurotic symptom itself. Reich called this approach 'character analysis' and developed techniques of working directly with the patient's body to release chronic muscle tensions which block the free flow of energy. This was the foundation for all somatic psychotherapy, from the gentlest psychodynamic massage to the more vigorous postural integrative massage and Rolfing.

Orgone energy is similar to various concepts of 'life force', in that it permeates the entire universe of living and non-living things. It is different from such abstractions, however, in that orgone energy is said to have a physical existence and to be visible: it is claimed that it is pale blue in colour and may be seen by the naked eye under certain conditions. One of its properties is that, in concentration, it heals illness.

The Orgone Accumulator

Reich built cabinets called 'orgone accumulators', constructed of alternating layers of steel wool and cork or wood. When patients suffering from systemic illnesses such as cancer sat in accumulators, improvements and cures were reported.

He moved into sociology and politics when he reasoned (and stated) that since it was the repressive society (the Third Reich, in this case) which produced repressive character deformations in people, it was the duty of psychoanalysts to work for social and political change. He advocated universal sex education, free abortion and state provision of places where adolescents could explore their burgeoning sexual natures. He was removed from the the register of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in 1937 for rocking a boat which was already in stormy waters.

Later experiments took Reich into weather control, the reversal of desertification of the American Southwest and speculation about the nature of flying saucers, areas where many hesitated to follow. In 1956 he was convicted of contempt of court in the United States and sentenced to prison, where he died a year later.

Although his orgone accumulators, books and research notes were burned by court order in 1956, recent years have seen a resurgence of work based on his ideas and research, usually unacknowledged. Some evidence which, it is claimed, shows confirmation of the existence of orgone energy comes from bio-plasma research at Alma Ata University (see KIRLIAN PHOTOGRAPHY) and from Chinese medicine. The American *Journal of Acupuncture* called Reich the 'discoverer of acupuncture energy', and Israel Regardie, psychiatrist, cabalist and magician, considered orgone energy to be the link between western science and the occult (see REGARDIE).

Today, when many doctors worldwide are treating systemic illness with orgone accumulators and neither the orgasm theory nor the idea that our planet is a living organism bathed in living energy would cause little more than a raised eyebrow, it is difficult to deny that Wilhelm Reich was a pioneer of the human spirit at least the equal of Freud and Jung. For, where they explored the human mind and soul, he demonstrated that both are rooted in the body.

S. DAVIS-KING

FURTHER READING: Wilhelm Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm* (Souvenir Press Ltd, 1983) and *Character Analysis* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980); Myron Sharaf, *Fury on Earth, a Biography of Wilhelm Reich* (St. Martins Press, 1986); David Boadella, *Wilhelm Reich, The Evolution of his Work* (Arkana, 1985).

'The Personality which animates each one of us is immeasurably ancient, having been forged in many fires'; exponents of reincarnation believe that the soul must pass through a recurring cycle of birth-death-rebirth until ultimately achieving salvation

REINCARNATION

ONE OF THE MORE controversial religious beliefs, reincarnation has long been accepted by Hindus and Buddhists, and is today increasingly adopted as an article of faith by a large number of people in other religious denominations. Reincarnation implies the state of being 'embodied anew'. That is, the soul of a deceased person, after an interim period in the otherworld, is reborn in accordance with the merits acquired during its previous lifetime.

The human soul, it is believed, is a fragment of the divine, and will ultimately return to its divine source. But it is necessary for its own evolution that it should savour to the full the various experiences that life provides, and learn to distinguish the good from the bad, the eternal from the temporal. However, its ultimate destiny is far too great for this education to be completed in one brief sojourn on earth, in the limited range of one lifetime and a single bodily form. The psycho-physical experience of a male, for instance, is totally dissimilar to that of a female, and it is essential to have both if half of a fundamental experience is not to be missed. Obviously the soul must cover a wide range of knowledge and suffering in order to mature satisfactorily and only the soul that has been through tribulation can hope to be fit for the divine purpose for which it is intended.

Slowly, in the course of its successive rebirths, the soul rids itself of its accumulated and inherited impurities, and evolves towards the goal of perfection. The novelist Rider Haggard, who was extremely interested in reincarnation, wrote: 'The Personality which animates each one of us is immeasurably ancient, having been forged in many fires.'

Belief in reincarnation is very old, and is found in widely scattered primitive and preliterate communities. Its postulates are basic to Hinduism and most schools of Buddhism. Roman writers said it was prevalent among the Gauls and Druids. Several Greek schools of thought, notably the Orphics and Pythagoreans, subscribed to it, and Plato mentions it in the concluding part of his *Republic*. In later times the doctrine was adopted by the Essenes, Pharisees, Karaites and other Jewish and semi-Jewish religious groups. The Gnostics and Neo-platonists also held the theory (see GNOSTICISM; NEO-PLATONISM), and it formed part of the cabalistic theology of medieval Jewry.

St Jerome (340-420) said that reincarnation in a special sense was taught among the early Christians and was given an esoteric interpretation that was communicated to a select few. Origen (186-253) thought that only in the light of reincarnation could certain scriptural passages be explained. But it was condemned by the Second Council of Constantinople, convened by the Emperor Justinian in 553, and became for a time heretical doctrine. 'If anyone assert the fabulous pre-existence of souls,' decreed the Council, 'and shall submit to the monstrous doctrine that follows from it, let him be anathema.' Some scholars nonetheless believe that they can detect traces of the teaching in the writings of St Augustine, St Gregory and even St Francis of Assisi. Among its modern exponents are Theosophists, Anthroposophists and certain Spiritualists.

The Law of Destiny

Many people feel that the theory of reincarnation is in keeping with the idea of evolution and human progress and perfectibility. If man has shown a progressive advance from the lower animal forms to his present state of intellectual and moral development, it is clear that further progress is part of the plan for his future. The physical universe provides the environment for this advance to perfection, and it is here that he must work out his own destiny.

If the ultimate reasonableness of the cosmic purpose is accepted, a theory that can so logically account for the birth of congenital idiots, for those who die in childhood, and for others who have been given no chance to live out their lives, should clearly be given serious consideration.

The orthodox Christian finds it hard to explain the existence of a child who dies in infancy, bringing nothing but heartbreak to his parents. What is the purpose of the infant's transient passage through this world? What is his final destiny? Does he go to heaven?

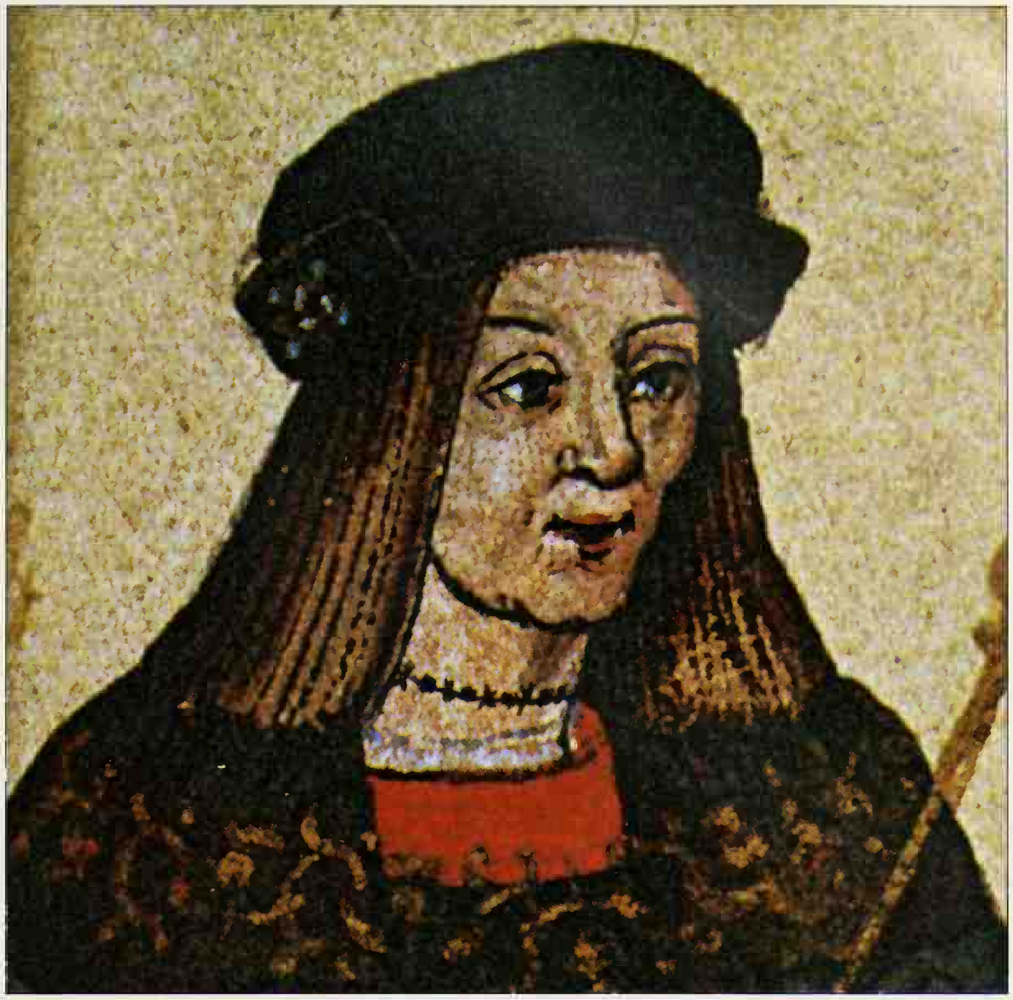
If he does, it would seem to be unfair to the adult who must face the vicissitudes and temptations of a long life, and in the end perhaps find himself condemned to be punished for having succumbed to the temptations to which he was inevitably exposed. By a stroke of good luck the child, who has never encountered such pitfalls, goes straight to the happy lands reserved for the blessed.

According to reincarnationists, the stillborn baby, the mongol, the child who dies in infancy, are all merely adjusting the balance sheet of their own previous lives by these temporary shifts and accommodations. Some are receiving their reward, some their punishment, for what they have done before. It will all work out equitably in the end. There is a mathematical precision about the way the law of destiny operates. No one can escape its clauses. The fate of mortals must be worked out in accordance with strict principles and all the apparent inconsistencies, injustices and contradictions will be sorted out in future lifetimes.

The doctrine of reincarnation, say the believers, therefore absolves God from any charge of injustice, favouritism, cruelty or caprice. Each person is ultimately responsible for his own destiny. Much that seems inexplicable in the situations that confront man in this life can be reviewed against this background, for they are the result of events that occurred in a past incarnation. The pattern of our destiny is woven with the threads that we ourselves have spun.

In what form does the soul return to earth? Some schools of belief, particularly in Hinduism, hold that a man does not necessarily assume a human form in his next incarnation. Certain Hindu sects teach that the soul may be reborn as a plant, or an animal. Someone who has lived a life of vice or crime may be re-embodied as a cactus, a poison ivy, a lizard or a toad. According to the early Hindu law-giver Manu, the slayer of a Brahmin enters the womb of a sow or she-ass; a drunkard will be reborn as a bird that lives on dung; and other sinners and reprobates will become hyenas, rodents, insects and creatures of low and repulsive estate.

Plant and animal transmigrations are not as a rule accepted by Western reincarnationists, who believe that once a soul has



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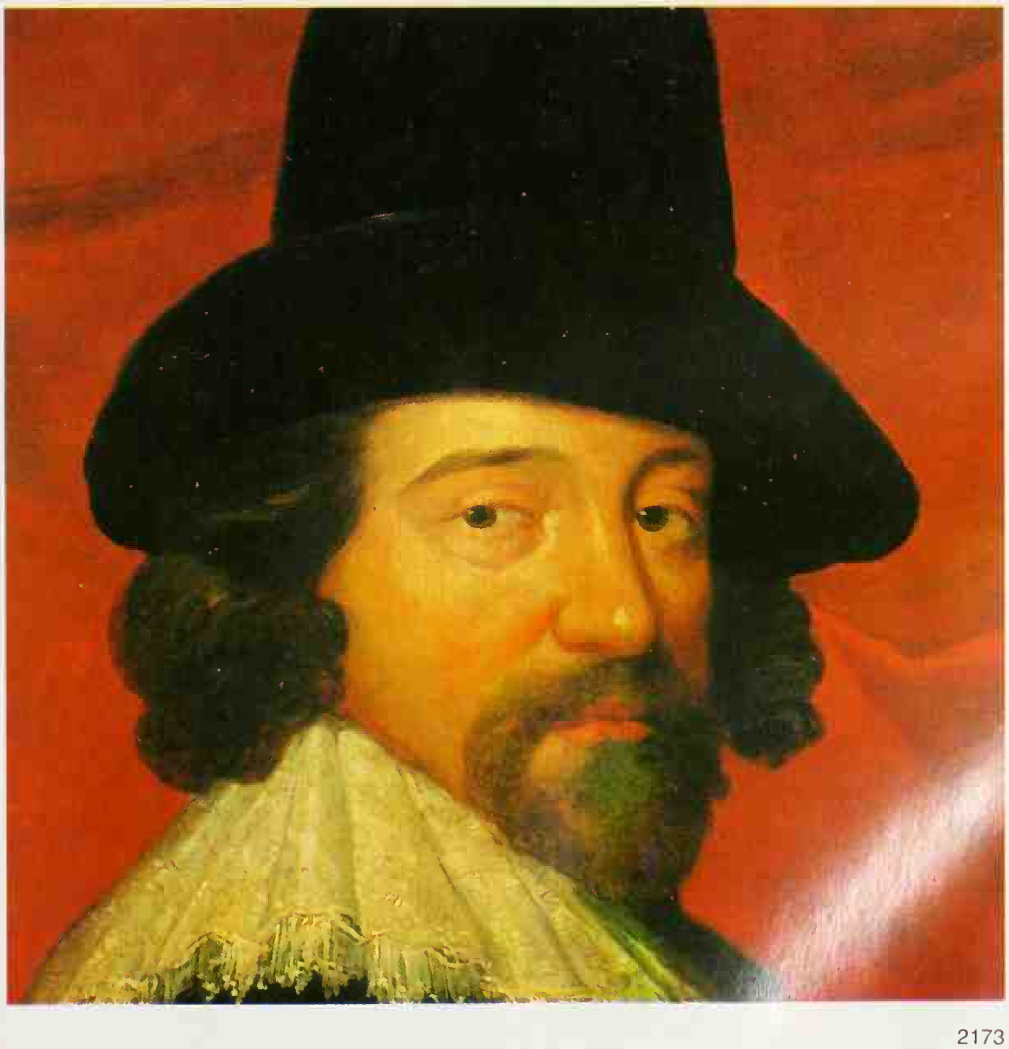


Above **A modern writer, A.J. Stewart, who believed herself to be a reincarnation of James IV of Scotland described her life as the King in a book entitled *Falcon: Portrait of James IV***

Right **Certain advanced beings return voluntarily to earth to help humanity, according to reincarnationists; one of these 'Masters' is said to have lived as the philosopher Proclus in the 5th century AD, and as Francis Bacon, among other incarnations: portrait of Bacon, in the National Portrait Gallery, London**

reached the human stage in its evolution it never returns to animal form. Human beings can only be reborn as men and women, and have the status and grade commensurate with their deserts, earned in their previous lives. One may be born a prince, a blind man or a leper.

Other questions are: how often does the soul return? Is the process indefinite? Considering that all men fall woefully short of the glory of God, what hope is there for anyone to attain the state of perfection required under the terms of this belief?

The number of chances each person has is said to range from three (once as a man, once as a woman, and once in the sex in which the soul fared better) to many thousands, some of which started at the beginning of Creation and may continue to the end of time. But it is generally believed that the cycle of birth-death-rebirth can be terminated by one or more of the various disciplines prescribed in the religious texts. Among them are renunciation, asceticism, good works, prayer, ritual and faith.

The Plain of Forgetfulness

The length of time for which the soul remains in the otherworld between incarnations is said to be determined by a number of factors. It seems to depend primarily on the condition of the soul concerned. In some cases it may return immediately, and in others after years, even centuries.

Certain advanced beings do not have to return at all, but do so voluntarily in order to assist the efforts of other men in their evolution towards perfection. In Buddhism such evolved beings are called Bodhisattvas, and it is believed that some of them have reincarnated again and again, and will continue to do so until all men are saved (see BUDDHISM).

The Tibetans believe that the Bodhisattva named Avalokitesvara became incarnate as their spiritual head, the Dalai Lama, and that each successive Dalai Lama is the embodiment of that august being. This idea determines the choice of successor to their deceased pontiff. When a Dalai Lama dies his soul does not wait in the otherworld as do the shades of lesser mortals, but immediately occupies the body of a child born at the precise moment of his death. It is the task of a special committee of senior lamas to find the child in question (see DALAI LAMA; LAMA).

What the soul does while it awaits re-embodiment is again a matter of opinion among the various schools. Generally it is thought that in the next world it reaps its crop of rewards and punishments and learns its lessons before being despatched to earth again. Some dim vestige of memory survives this experience and is brought back to earth.

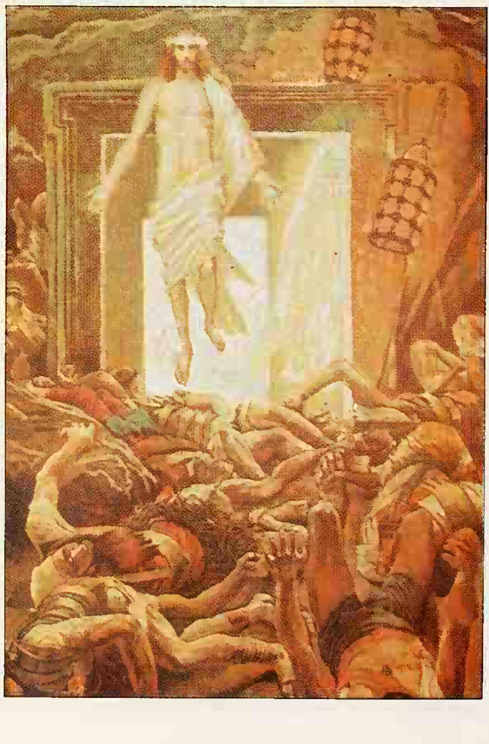
According to the Platonic theory the soul participates in the transcendental world of Ideas before it enters the earthly body at birth. These Ideas are Truth, Beauty and Goodness, of which the soul continues to receive intimations during its sojourn in bodily form. This recollection arouses in the individual a desire to regain the lost glory of his former estate. Man can, consequently, find true knowledge by remembering truths known to him before he took on a mortal frame. This idea is combined with another Platonic notion of what happens between incarnations. In his *Republic* Plato relates the legend of the warrior Er the Pamphylian, son of Armenias, who was killed in battle and was found some days later, brought home for cremation, and suddenly came back to life. He described what occurred after death.

Each soul, he said, was given a chance to select the form of its next incarnation, but the choice was hampered by its own shortcomings, for whether it chose wisely or foolishly now depended on the insight and wisdom acquired during its past life. The responsibility was entirely its own. Heaven was guiltless. It was a wonderful sight, he said, at once melancholy and ludicrous, to watch how everyone made their choices. After their selection they had to drink of the river situated in the Plain of Forgetfulness, so that they lost all remembrance of the past. They were then sent earthwards this way and that, like shooting stars.

Chinese Buddhism speaks of Meng P'o, the presiding goddess of the underworld, who makes all souls assigned to her dread domain between incarnations partake of a drink of broth before they go back to earth to live out another life. This broth is both bitter and sweet and causes all that happened before to be forgotten. It is because they have quaffed the drink of forgetfulness in Meng P'o's kitchen that men do not remember their previous existence.

But there have been highly evolved souls who claimed to be able to recollect their past lives. The Greek philosopher Empedocles, who lived in the 5th century BC, is said to have remembered himself as a fish, a bird, a maid and a youth, and several other thinkers among the ancients made similar assertions.

Below **Jesus is believed to have appeared on earth after his death on the cross, and many Christians have awaited his Second Coming in the future: 19th-century painting of the resurrection of Christ, by James Tissot** ***Right*** **In Hinduism gods are believed to appear in the world in bodily incarnations age after age: the god Vishnu, in his incarnation as the boar Varaha, raising the earth goddess from the primeval ocean: 12th century AD**



Sonia Halliday

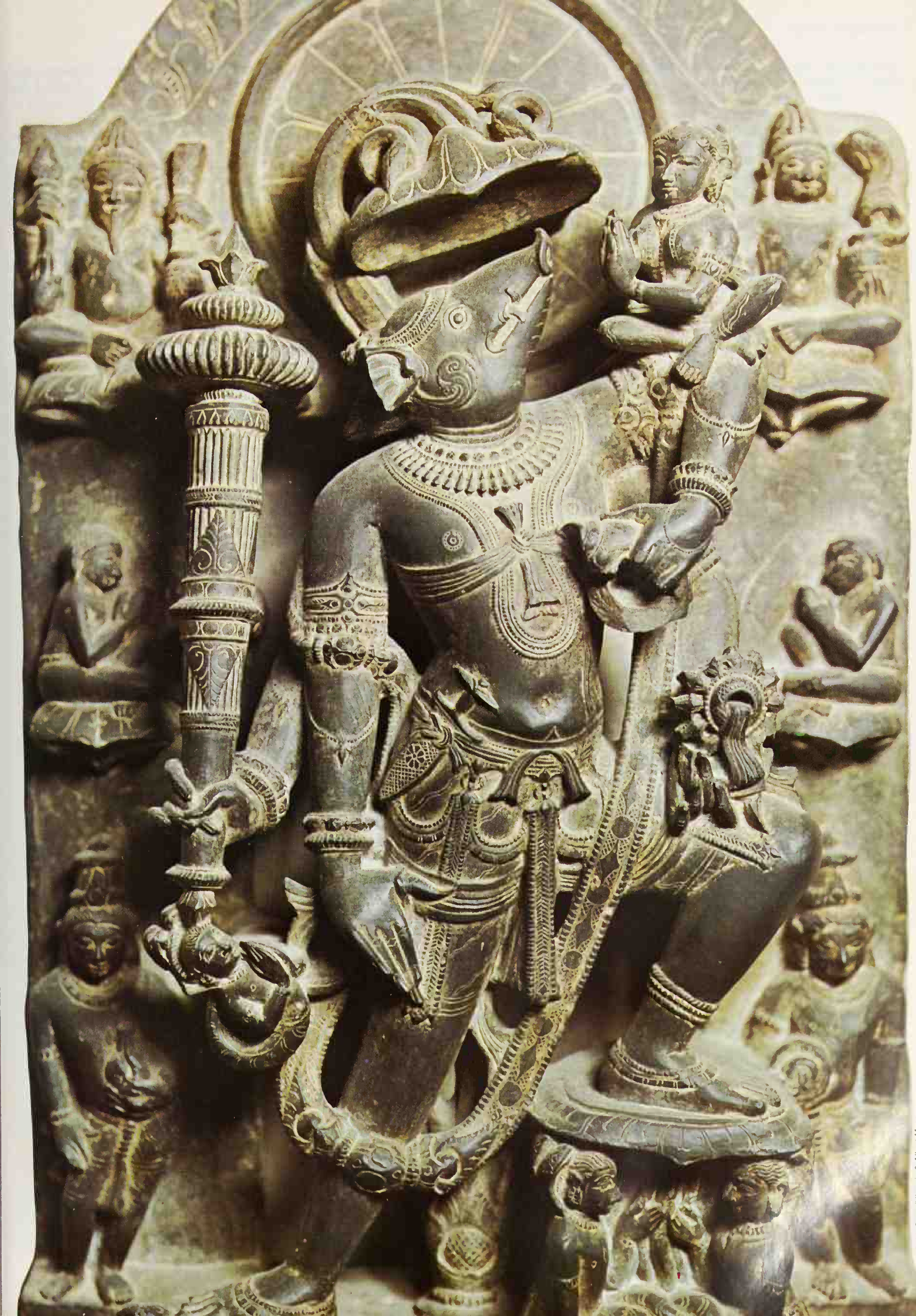
Modern exponents of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls also claim to remember their past lives, some going back to Rome, Greece, ancient Egypt or prehistory. The Theosophist Annie Besant (see BESANT) believed that she had lived as the female Neoplatonist martyr Hypatia (d. 415 AD) and as the philosopher and martyr Giordano Bruno (d. 1600: see BRUNO). Her colleague Colonel Olcott claimed to have been a prince in Atlantis, then Odysseus, as well as other eminent people.

A fact that creates a certain suspicion in the minds of sceptics is that advocates of the rebirth philosophy generally claim to have been Egyptian pharaohs, Babylonian kings, Persian rulers, Chinese princesses and so on; few indeed believe that they lived humble lives as ordinary men and women. Among various explanations, this could be due to a subconscious wish in the minds of those bound down by the drudgery of the workaday world for the more spacious days of the past.

Critics of the theory of reincarnation also argue that, if the soul is sent to earth in another body in order to progress in its spiritual evolution, it would seem reasonable that it should remember its past so that, knowing its shortcomings, it might benefit from its experience. However, they point out that, except for a handful of adepts, hardly anyone remembers what his past has been and where he has failed. How then do we know that we have had any previous identity, and what is there to link us with it?

The curious phenomenon of child prodigies may provide further evidence that people recapture flashes of their forgotten lives. In the 18th century, for instance, Jean Cardiac knew the alphabet when he was three months old, could converse in his mother tongue, French, when a year old, in Latin when three, in English when four, and in Greek and Hebrew at six, apart from various other languages. He also picked up a number of arts and skills before dying in 1726 at the age of seven. The famous 'Infant of Lubeck' in Germany, born in 1721, talked within a few hours of his birth, knew the chief events of the early parts of the Bible at the age of one, of the whole Bible at the age of two, and of world history at the age of three. At the same time he acquired a knowledge of Latin and French. He was sent for by the King of Denmark and astounded the monarch who had refused to believe in his powers. The child predicted his own death, which occurred when he was four.

Cases of mathematical prodigies of astonishing ability are also well attested. Many of these children answered, in a matter of seconds, intricate mathematical problems involving astronomical numbers, their minds apparently working like computers. Musical prodigies are also well known. Mozart, for instance, could compose at the



C. M. Dixon/Victoria & Albert Museum

age of five. Another famous prodigy was Pascal, who discovered a new geometrical system when he was 11 and wrote a treatise on acoustics the following year. According to the reincarnationists, all these children brought with them knowledge remembered from their past lives; they picked up their talents where they had left off.

Returning to the Past

There is also the curious, and far from uncommon, phenomenon of *déjà vu* (French for 'already seen'), in which people claim to have seen something, or known certain people, or had an encounter, not in this life but at some period that can only have been in another existence. A person brought up in England who has never travelled abroad before may pay a first visit to Norway, for instance, and while touring a remote village in the interior he may be suddenly gripped with the conviction that he has been there before, although he is just as sure that he has never been anywhere near the place in his present life. People in similar situations have been able to describe what they would see when they turned the corner and what lay over the crest of a hill, or behind a certain street.

Although this kind of experience can be explained as being a recollection of scenes viewed in a travel book or film travelogue or, more rarely, during an astral journey, reincarnationists tend to accept such instances as evidence of the person concerned having been there in a past life.

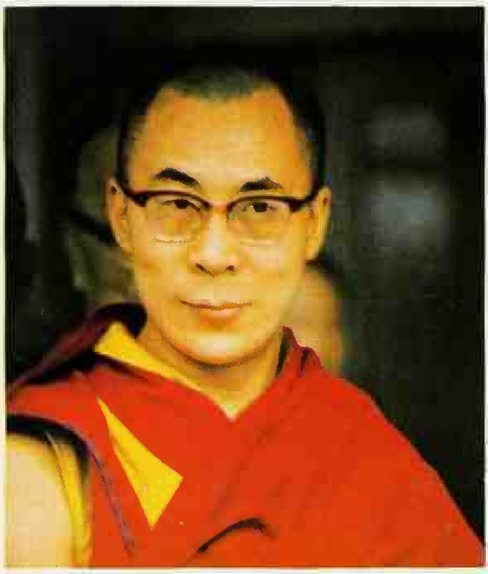
Professor Hemendra Banerjee, director of the Department of Parapsychology in Rajasthan University, India, devoted many years to the subject of reincarnation. He investigated the claims made on behalf of rebirth, and tested girls and boys as they led him or members of his team to former homes where they recognized relatives and identified their belongings. In the West, the leading authority is Professor Ian Stevenson, author of *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation.*

A well-known earlier case was that of a young girl named Shanti Devi who was born in Delhi in 1926. She insisted that she had lived before, and named the city of her former birth. On being taken there she pointed out correctly the secret places where she had hidden her toys, indicated her favourite haunts and identified her relatives and her former husband.

In Europe practical work has been conducted in what is called age-regression which, according to some reincarnationists, has provided further reinforcement of their claims. Experiments involve putting a subject under hypnosis and making him go back, by suggestion, to his childhood, and even his infancy, to re-live his early years. In certain cases this regression can ostensibly be carried back into what is claimed to have been a previous existence.

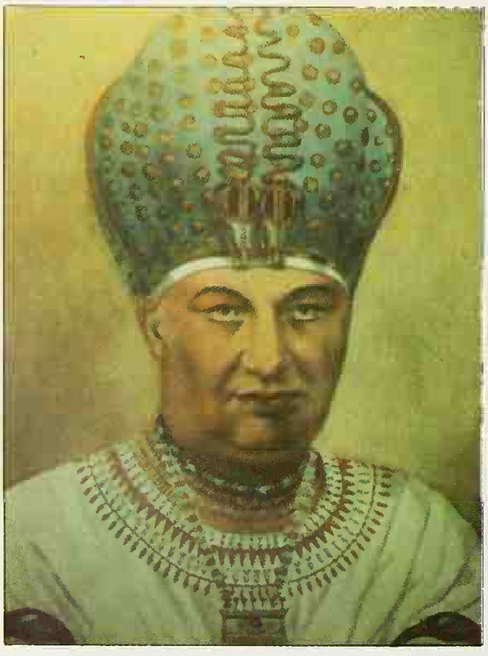
One of the most celebrated of this sort of case was recorded in 1952. A young housewife called Ruth Simmons, living in the US, was able to recall a past in Ireland as a woman called Bridie Murphy. It was alleged by those who challenged her story that, although she had claimed to have had no contact with Irish people and culture, she had lived close to an Irish family as a child, and that there was a woman in the family known as Bridie Murphy. Despite such rebuttals, hypnotherapists still use the technique (see REGRESSION).

Edgar Cayce, the famous American healer and prophet (see CAYCE), claimed to have recollections of his past lives extending all the way back to Atlantis. The same is true of the novelist Taylor Caldwell, and Joan Grant's historical novels are said to be based on memories of her previous lives. In the 1960s a British psychiatrist, Dr Arthur Guirdham, believed he had discovered a group of people living in England who had all known one another as Cathars in the south of France in the 13th century.



Camera Press London

Some souls are thought to spend many years in the otherworld between incarnations, while others return immediately to earth; Tibetans believe the Dalai Lama (*above*) to be an embodiment of Avalokitesvara, whose soul enters a child's body at the moment of a Dalai Lama's death. Aleister Crowley (*below*) believed he was a reincarnation of Eliphas Levi, who died the year that Crowley was born



Opponents of the doctrine of reincarnation have not been slow to point out its shortcomings as an acceptable philosophy of life. Implicit in its teachings is the corollary that victims of poverty, chronic ill health or inherited diseases are only suffering for their own past misdeeds, as retribution for the iniquities of their previous lives. If this idea is carried to its logical conclusion it would seem that attempting to relieve the distress and misery of others is almost meddling in the affairs of providence. If a person has been put into this world to redress the balance of his own wicked past, what business is it of ours to interfere and disturb the ordinances of God?

There is also the demoralizing effect that such a belief could have on a person's character. Why keep the faith and fight the good fight? What inducement is there to resist temptation? Would it not be an act of folly to spurn delights and pleasures if the chance to enjoy them is there? If destiny has put these glorious opportunities in a man's way, why should he not make the best of them? If his actions turn out to be sinful and are marked on the debit side of the ledger, there is always another chance.

The 18th-century Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (see SWEDENBORG) rejected reincarnation on principle. He held that every man is a new creation and has never existed before, and explained recollections of past lives as being the work of evil spirit entities who projected these false histories on the minds of those susceptible to receive them. Belief in the doctrine naturally made the mind receptive to the false clues provided by the evil spirits.

Another note of caution was sounded by Dr Carl Wickland of Chicago, who devoted his life to the subject of after-death experiences, so-called spirit possession and other related matters. Dr Wickland, who published his findings in 1924, wrote that those who die convinced that they will ultimately be reincarnated impede their own further evolution. Belief in the theory is not only false but harmful, for it acts as a psychic barrier against progress to the higher spiritual planes after death.

Reincarnation may not be universal. The intensity of a man's faith may ultimately determine what happens to his soul in the next world. To the Christian the cycle of birth-death-rebirth, if indeed there is any such cycle, is broken by Christ's atoning sacrifice. Faith in its redemptive power not only dissolves the bonds of Satan but also releases the soul from the wheel of eternal return. In other words for the Christian the belief is superfluous; he does not need it.
(See also IMMORTALITY; KARMA.)

BENJAMIN WALKER*

FURTHER READING: J.H. Brennan, *Reincarnation*, 2nd ed., (Aquarian Press, 1981); C. J. Ducasse, *A Critical Examination of the Belief in Life After Death* (C.C.Thomas, 1974); J. Head and S.L. Cranston, *Reincarnation, the Phoenix Fire Mystery* (Julian Press, 1977); I. Stevenson, *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation* (Virginia Univ. Press, 1974); I. Wilson, *Mind out of Time?* (Gollancz, 1981).

RELICS

A DEAD BODY does not decompose overnight. Years, even centuries later, identifiable bones or ashes may still exist, as well as garments and other possessions. Such mementoes have often been preserved with high honour and religious awe. They are then known as relics, from the Latin *reliquiae*, 'remains'.

In societies with a strong belief in magic, people may revere a corpse, and endow portions of it with special powers. The result is not always preservation; it may be the opposite. Some cannibals expect to absorb a dead man's qualities by eating a piece of him. But human remains can also become amulets, and this approaches more closely to the conception of a relic. In the Andaman Islands in the bay of Bengal, a necklace of bones is a charm to ward off evil, because the ghost is flattered and therefore friendly. Elsewhere, skulls are favoured. The ancient Celts attributed potency to heroes' heads and that of Bran buried on Tower Hill, protected Britain against invasion (see HEAD).

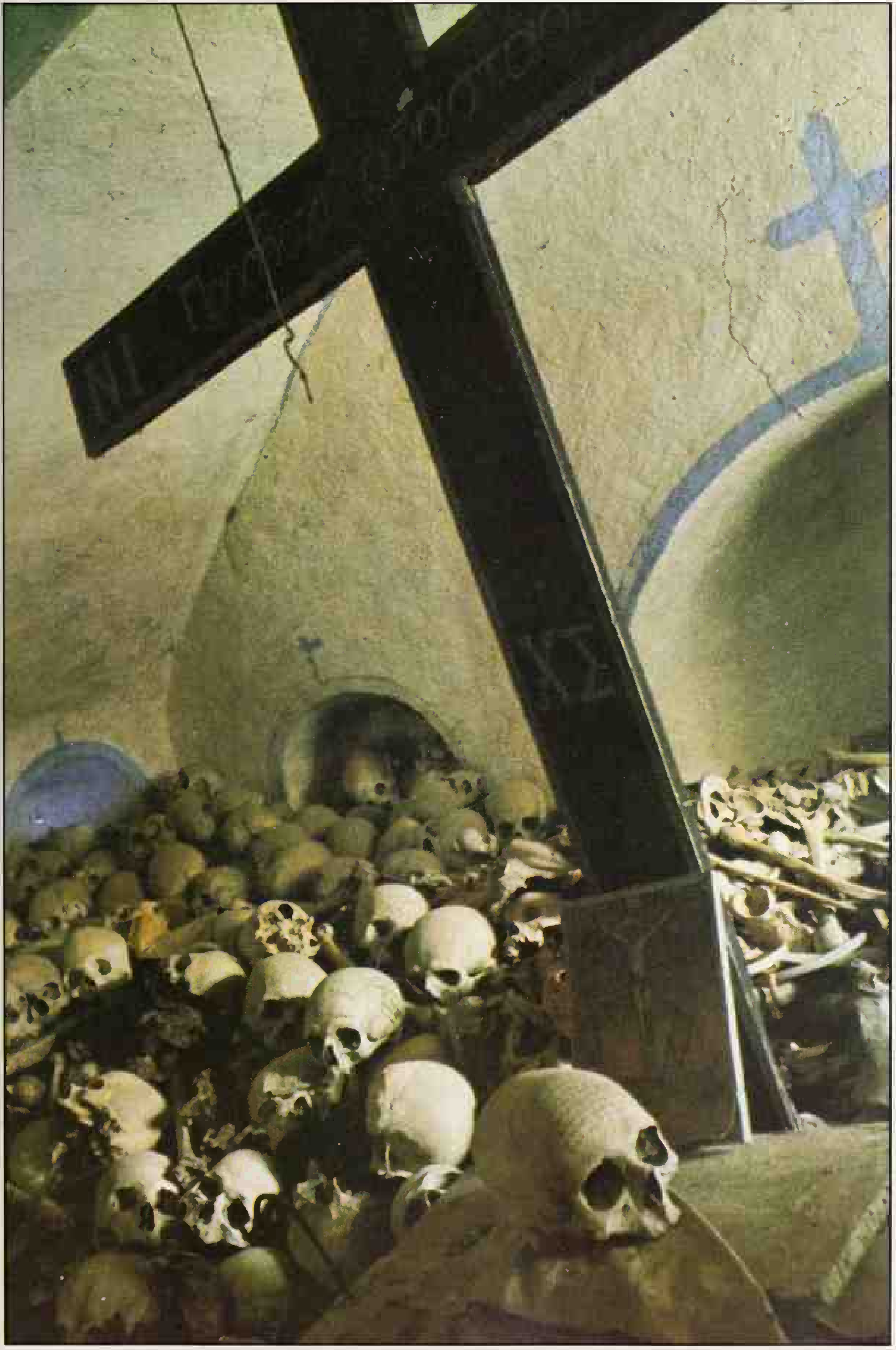
Things associated with the dead, but not actually part of them, are also treasured in several primitive cultures. The *churinga* of central Australia – magical objects handed down from totemic ancestors – are kept in shrines and credited with powers of healing.

Three major religions have attached importance to relics: Buddhism, Greek paganism, and Christianity. Buddhism began as a movement within Hinduism led by Gautama (see BUDDHISM; GAUTAMA). There was not much veneration of relics in India before him, probably because Hinduism lacked historical founders. Gautama's disciples, seeing him as the unique Enlightened One, gave him personal devotion of a new kind. The remains of his cremated body were divided among eight of them. Seven principal relics (real or alleged) came down to posterity – the four canine teeth, the frontal or forehead bone, and two pieces of collar-bone. These and smaller fragments have been kept for thousands of years. The most famous is a tooth in Kandy, Ceylon. Such souvenirs of Buddha and other saints are richly housed in *stupas* or shrines. Modern India supplies a Hindu parallel in the treatment of Mahatma Gandhi (see MAHATMAS). After his cremation in 1948, particles of ash were given to several associates. One is enshrined at Juhu near Bombay.

While Buddhism was taking shape, respect for relics was being carried at least as far in the contemporary cults of the Greek city states. Many temples had parts of the bodies of legendary heroes, or their supposed possessions. The relics were often kept in a chapel or *heroon* and were thought to protect the city. Athens possessed the remains of Theseus, brought there from the island of Scyros with a civic ritual which is described by Plutarch. Epidaurus had the bones of Asclepios, and in a bronze coffer in the temple of Zeus at Elis lay the shoulder-blade of Pelops. The city of Argos hoarded the bones of his father Tantalus in a similar vessel. Sometimes the sacred objects were hidden, with a taboo or spell attached. At Libethra there were relics of Orpheus, which had to be kept out of the sunlight. If it fell on them, the city would be destroyed.

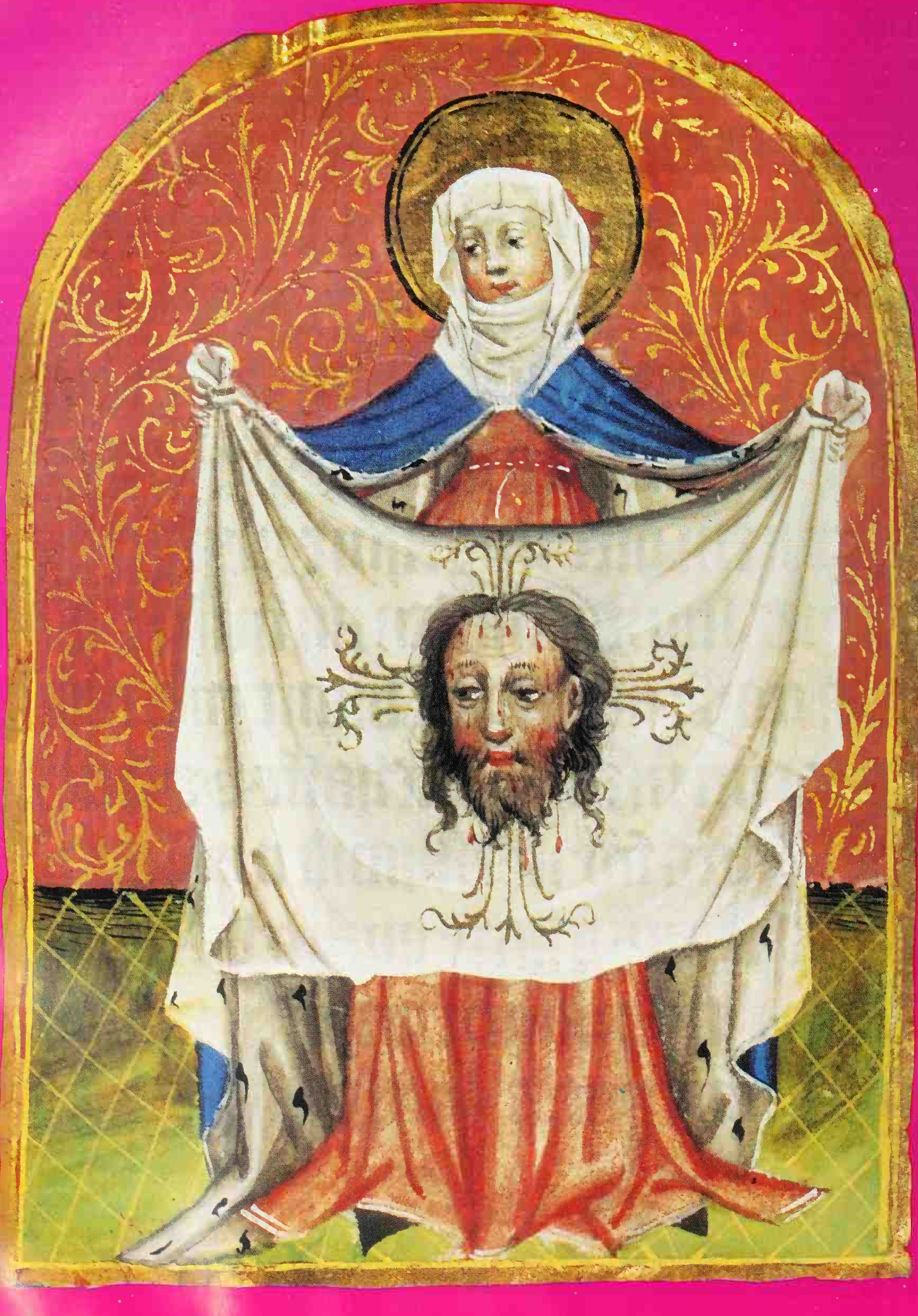
Besides these bodily remains, Agamemnon's sceptre received daily homage at Chaeronea; the spear of Achilles, Helen's sandals, the shield of Pyrrhus, were all carefully preserved. Marsyas's flute was in the temple of Apollo at Sicyon; and Orpheus's lyre was in more temples than one. The more far-fetched items included some unused scraps of the clay from which Prometheus made men, and one of the eggs laid by Leda after her encounter with Zeus in the shape of a swan.

The mystical trend of later Greek religion brought with it a contempt for matter, and a corresponding decline of interest in relics. However, the cult was revived by the Christian Church, and taken much further. God had become man in Jesus Christ, therefore he had hallowed the body, and matter generally. Christ's resurrection, the pledge of the resurrection of all, meant that this hallowing was universal and everlasting. The bodies of saints were temples of the Holy Spirit, destined to be raised and glorified. Through them God bestowed



John Marmaras/Susan Griggs

The head of a saint or holy man has been regarded with particular awe in many cultures as it is thought to contain the essence of a person's life-energy and character: skulls of monks, in a monastery on Mt Athos, Greece



benefits on mankind which did not cease at death. Furthermore, objects connected with the saints might carry a share of supernatural virtue.

In support of these doctrines, theologians quote Exodus 13.19 and Joshua 24.32, referring to the Israelites' care for the bones of Joseph; 2 Kings 13.21, where a corpse comes to life after contact with the remains of the prophet Elisha; and Acts 5.15 and 19.11–12, where the sick are healed by Peter's shadow and by cloths which Paul has handled.

In the Roman Catholic tradition it is held proper to 'adore' a relic as a means of communion with the saint on whom it fixes the mind, and as a channel of divine power and grace. A few Fathers of the Church, notably Cyril of Jerusalem, maintained that a relic could have power in itself. This semi-magical idea never received the Church's endorsement. If miracles happen when a relic is present, God is the worker. The relic is, so to speak, the occasion.

The oldest reliable Christian relic-story concerns St Polycarp. A letter issued by his disciples in Smyrna, in 156, describes how he was burnt at the stake. It goes on: 'We took up his bones, more precious than jewels and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place where the Lord will permit us to gather ourselves together, and celebrate the anniversary of his martyrdom.'

By the 4th century the Christian cult of relics was far advanced. Special caskets called reliquaries were made to keep them in. Not only the remains of whole bodies, but chips of bone and parcels of dust, were prized. The whole concept was also being enlarged. When St Vincent was martyred in 304, bystanders dipped pieces of linen in his blood, which became heirlooms.

The first clearly-reported Christian relic that was not in any sense a part of a body is the True Cross, on which Jesus was crucified (see CROSS). After Constantine's conversion in 312, his mother Helena directed excavations in Jerusalem and announced its discovery. Soon slivers of the holy wood had been distributed to Christians throughout the Empire.

About the same time, there is an allusion to St James's chair; and some decades later Augustine wrote of miracles performed by soil from the Holy Land, oil from the lamps in a martyr's church, flowers fresh from contact with a reliquary.

There is no sign of any protest. The principal Fathers of the Church at this period – Augustine himself, Jerome, Ambrose – take relics for granted as part of the apparatus of religion. Gregory of Nyssa speaks of the desire of Christians to be buried near the tombs of martyrs. The only disagreement is over certain proprieties. Eastern Christians had few scruples about breaking up a saint's body; Western Christians were averse to dismemberment. Pressed for relics to go into new churches, Rome tried an expedient. During the 6th century it was customary to lower a box containing pieces of fabric onto the tombs of the apostles Peter and Paul. As soon as the box touched the tomb, these counted as relics. But the Second Council of Nicaea, in 787, decreed that every church must have a relic under its altar, and the demand finally overbore resistance: the saints, in the West as in the East, were dissected without limit.

It was now the West – Merovingian and Carolingian France, Anglo-Saxon England, Celtic Ireland – that ran to extremes of adoration. The faithful visited relics to kiss them, to be cured by them, to take oaths on them. In the high Middle Ages, reliquaries grew ever more gorgeous, the ritual of enshrinement ever more splendid.

Abuses were bound to occur. Even in Roman times Augustine complained of tricksters disguised as monks, selling holy fakes. Bishops tried to forbid the sale of any relics – in vain. The export of fragments of deceased martyrs from Rome became a regular trade. Relics were hotly denounced by the Reformers, especially Calvin. The attitude of Protestant Christianity has always been restrained.

During the ages of faith – or in this case, credulity – the limits to what might be alleged were purely doctrinal. With Christ and Mary dogma imposed vetoes. Since Christ himself had risen to heaven, few remains of his actual body could exist on earth, apart from congealed drops of blood (as at Fécamp in Normandy). Much the same restriction applied to Mary, whose son had taken her to himself after death, leaving an empty tomb. Apart from what was thus excluded, almost anything might be produced as a relic.

Relics multiplied during the Middle Ages, and devout Christians went on pilgrimages to worship them *Below* Reliquary containing the hand of St Attale, in Strasbourg *Facing page* Christ's features are said to have been miraculously imprinted on St Veronica's veil when he used it to wipe the sweat from his brow while on the way to Calvary: illustration from a 15th century German manuscript showing St Veronica holding the relic; the original veil is said to have been in Rome from the 8th century

Giraudon

This raises the whole question of authenticity. Many relics of recent saints are well attested; those of earlier dates are more doubtful, and often incredible. Rivalry among medieval shrines led to serio-comic disputes, with several claiming the same saint or the same object. Glastonbury Abbey in England professed to have the remains of St Patrick, St Dunstan, and many others, in defiance of competitors with far stronger claims. It also possessed a splinter from the table of the Last Supper, and one of the stones which Christ refused to turn into bread. Outside England, the more surprising relics included a feather from the wing of the angel Gabriel; a jar full of the darkness inflicted on Egypt by Moses; rays from the Star of Bethlehem; samples of the Virgin's milk; and a whole wardrobe of her chemises.

There are records of early attempts at verification. Most, however, consisted merely in seeing whether a relic worked miracles. The most famous case is that of the True Cross itself. When Helena searched for it, she unearthed the timbers of three crosses, and picked out Christ's by its ability to cure a sick man. Other relics were 'authenticated' by manuscripts and even labels, palpably forged. Objective scrutiny is a fairly modern development, and its conclusions are usually adverse. At best the results of study are seldom more than negative, in the sense of showing that a relic is not demonstrably bogus.

An interesting relic of Christ, from a non-devotional point of view, is the Holy Shroud of Turin. It bears the imprint of a body wounded in the correct places, which, if artificial, implies a knowledge of anatomy and the effects of crucifixion hard to account for in the Middle Ages. The Roman Catholic Church, however, does not pronounce on the authenticity of this or any other relic. After the Counter-Reformation, many of the more absurd ones were quietly got rid of. Yet caution rather than iconoclasm has remained the norm. The Jesuit Herbert Thurston, an erudite and sceptical historian, defended bishops who left matters alone, on the ground that in many places religion is so closely bound up with 'some ancient special devotion' that it would be hard to disentangle the false from the true.

From a Catholic point of view the genuineness of a relic is not as crucial as might appear. So long as the object is regarded not as having magical power of its own, but as orienting the worshipper toward a Presence behind, it can be highly suspect without invalidating the cult. It becomes scandalous only where the faithful are led to believe, literally, a flagrant falsehood.

GEOFFREY ASHE

RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE

MAN'S EARLIEST religious sanctuaries were in caves, which were adapted in various ways for religio-magical rites. It is only possible to speculate on why the peoples of the Old Stone Age chose caves for this purpose, but their use of them did involve a factor of considerable significance. It was the inner parts of the cave systems that were utilized for their magical paintings and ritual ceremonies. This meant that the Paleolithic peoples had to face the fearful experience of penetrating into the dark subterranean unknown, illuminated only by the light of primitive torches or lamps. The fact that they did so must surely imply some motive strong enough to overcome their natural dread; and it seems reasonable to suppose that the mysterious and terrifying nature of the caverns was felt to render them proper places for contact with the powers evoked by their magic. (See also CAVE ART; CAVES.)

The earliest constructed sanctuaries date from the seventh millennium BC, and have been found at Jericho and Catal Hüyük in Anatolia. The identification of those at Jericho is not certain; one seems to have contained a sacred stone pillar. The sanctuaries found at Catal Hüyük are of unique interest. Some 40 shrines distributed over nine building-levels were unearthed there. In plan and structure they were identical with the houses, and formed an integral part of the complex of buildings that constituted the urban settlement at Catal Hüyük at various stages.

Sanctuaries of the Goddess

The shrines or sanctuaries were distinguished from domestic buildings by their lay-out and decoration. They served the cult of a goddess, conceived in her three aspects of maiden, mother and old woman, and associated with the goddess was a deification of the male principle in the form of a bearded man or boy and a bull.

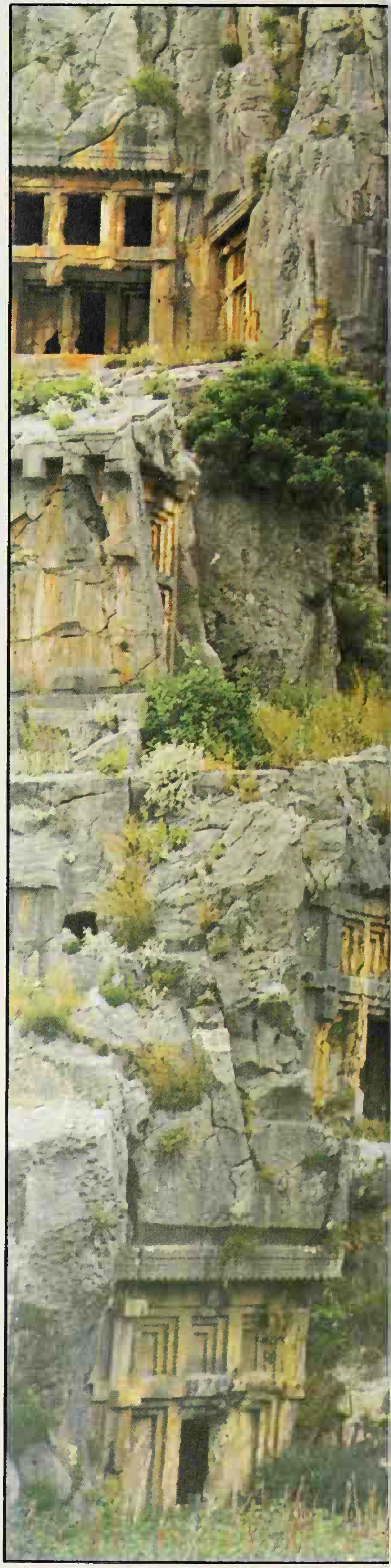
These sanctuaries were rich in symbolism. The walls were adorned with paintings and plaster reliefs, and rows of bulls' horns were set in benches on the floor. Among the paintings were illustrations of bulls and great black vultures with headless corpses (see HEADLESS SPIRITS). The goddess was represented, pregnant, on the wall in plaster relief, and also by cult images. Another curious feature were rows of women's breasts, moulded of plaster fixed to the walls and containing the skulls of foxes, weasels or vultures, and the jaw-bones of wild boars. Such symbolism seems to indicate that the cult performed in these sanctuaries had a double theme: both fertility and death.

Stairway from the Stars

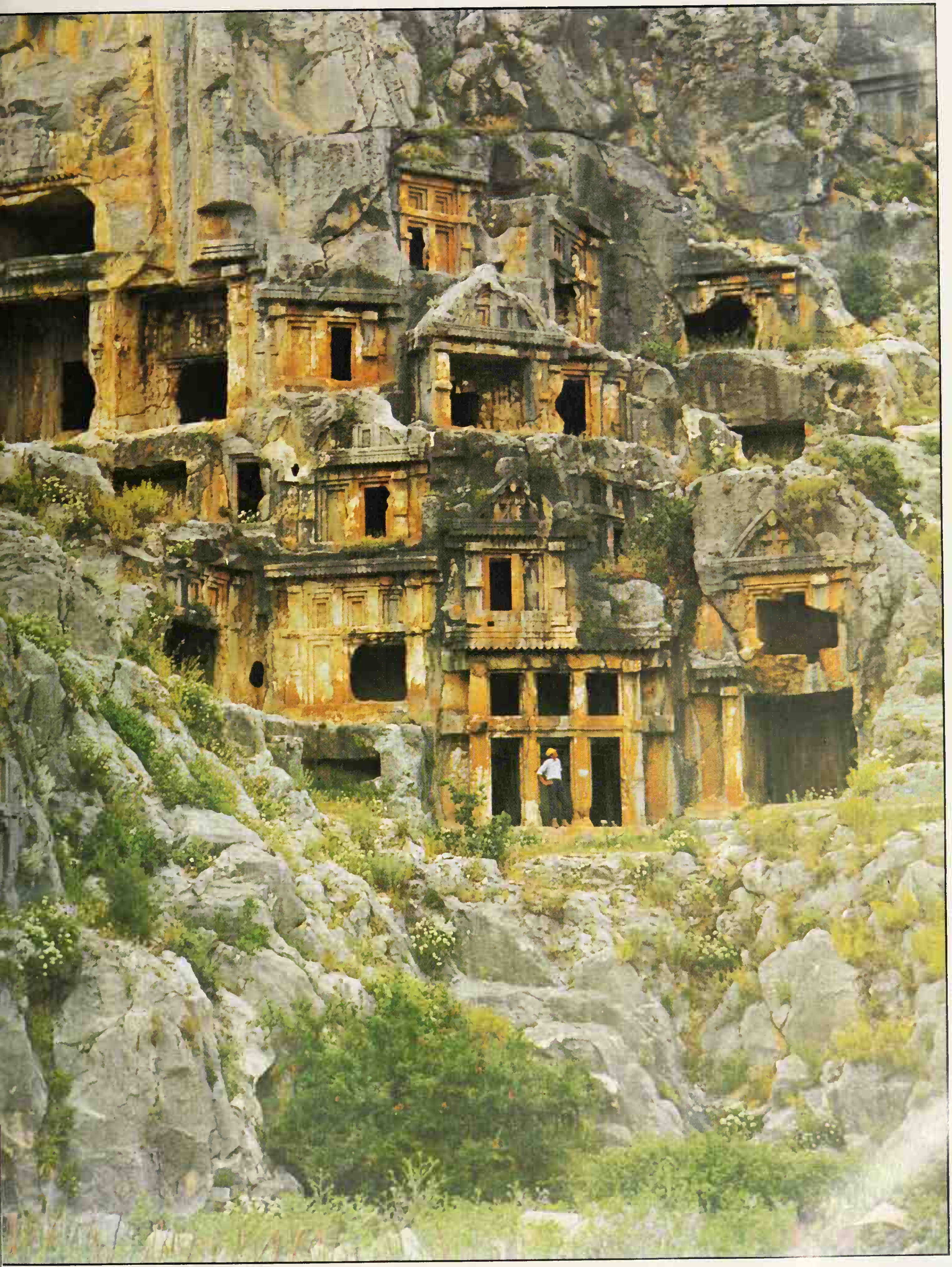
Most of the temples of ancient Mesopotamia comprised a great square tower, consisting of several stages and known as a *ziggurat*. On the flat Mesopotamian plain they would have been the most notable features of the landscape, and their significance and purpose has excited much interest. The Greek historian Herodotus (5th century BC) records that the ziggurat of the temple of Marduk at Babylon had seven stages, and that there was a richly adorned couch in the shrine at the top. He was informed by the priests that each night a woman awaited there the descent of the god (see PROSTITUTION). This colourful story has been questioned by modern scholars; but as there is no explanation of the ziggurat in ancient Mesopotamian records, and none of the top storeys of the ziggurats excavated has survived, it is only possible to speculate on the function of these towers.

It has been proposed that the Sumerians, who founded Mesopotamian civilization, came originally from a land where they worshipped their gods on hilltops and that, when they built their temples in flat Mesopotamia, they raised artificial hills. An alternative theory is that the ziggurat represented a 'cosmic mountain', which was the tomb of a dying and rising god (see VEGETATION SPIRITS). It has also been suggested that the ziggurat was the throne of the deity, or that it constituted an immense altar for sacrifices.

The story of the tower of Babel (Genesis 11.3-5), which was based upon knowledge of the great Mesopotamian temple-towers, has been interpreted as indicating that the ziggurat was regarded as a means of descent and ascent for a sky-dwelling god. The fact that the shrine at the top of the ziggurat was called *Shakuru*, meaning 'waiting-room' or 'room of transit', has caused some



Tombs built into the rock at Myra in Turkey, a survival of the ancient belief that the mysterious nature of caves made them proper places for contact with the supernatural



Sonia Halliday

scholars to think that the 'epiphany' or manifestation of the deity was expected there.

The Temple and the Tomb

The religious symbolism of ancient Egyptian architecture found expression in two types of structure: the temple and the tomb. The temple was called the *het neter*, 'house of the god', and in its essential plan it was the habitation of the cult image of the god concerned. An Egyptian temple was dedicated specifically to a particular deity or a triad of deities. In the elaborately developed temples of the New Kingdom and Ptolemaic periods (see EGYPT) the cult image was housed in a shrine or *naos*, formed of a monolithic block of stone closed by doors.

This naos derived from the primitive hut that constituted the temple in Predynastic times. It was situated in what formed the Holy of Holies of the later temples – a chamber, unlighted by windows, which lay at the end of a series of larger colonnaded halls, and a peristyled open court (a court surrounded by a row of columns). Entrance into the latter was made through a great stone portal, flanked on either side by massive pylons. Before the pylons stood two obelisks and giant statues of the pharaoh, while from the base of the pylons rose tall masts from which white, green, blue and red streamers hung. Leading away from the portal was a double row of couchant sphinxes. The outer and inner walls, and the pillars, were decorated with carvings depicting ritual scenes and the victories of the pharaoh. Within the precincts of the great temples at Karnak were sacred lakes, and later temples often had a *mammisi* or 'birth-house', in which the birth of a divine child was ritually portrayed each year.

This complex of buildings was invested with a deep symbolism, for the temple, by virtue of its being the 'house of the god', was regarded as heaven. Each day when the doors of the naos were opened the officiant announced: 'The Gates of Heaven are opened.' The ceiling of the temple was painted to represent the sky and the celestial phenomena. Plants were depicted at the base of the walls and columns, so that they appeared to grow out of the ground. The ritual performed within the temple was believed to ensure the security and continuance of the land and people from hostile and threatening forces, and the whole imagery was designed to present the building as a symbol of the universe.

The pylons had their place in this symbolical scheme. Not only did their massive structure protect the entrance to the temple, but they were mystically identified with the goddesses Isis and Nephthys, who watched over Osiris and secured his resurrection from death (see OSIRIS). The approach to the Holy of Holies was also carefully contrived. It was a gradual transition from the secular world, bathed in the strong Egyptian sunlight, through the deepening darkness of the great halls, their roofs supported on pillars, into the intense blackness that enshrouded the naos of the god.

Another type of temple was erected in Egypt for the worship of the sun god Re. Of the first and most famous sun temple at Heliopolis nothing survives; but its plan was followed for those erected by the first three kings of the 5th Dynasty (c 2500 BC). The excavated ruins of one of these at Abu Gurob reveal the design. The sanctuary consisted of an open court, which was surrounded by a walled enclosure containing store rooms. This court was dominated by a great truncated obelisk, standing on a tall podium or pedestal, before which was a large altar. It was evidently felt that the sun god was to be worshipped in the open air. Outside the temple precinct a brick barque was built, symbolizing the solar barque in which Re, the sun god, was imagined as crossing the sky each day. The significance of the obelisk is unknown. In the Abu Gurob temple it may have represented the *ben-ben* stone in the sanctuary at Heliopolis, which marked the place of the 'primeval hill' where the sun god first appeared out of the watery abyss of Nun (see CREATION MYTHS).

The Egyptians' profound concern with death and the afterlife made the tomb an object of immense importance to them. Throughout the period of their civilization, various kinds of tomb were used: there was the ancient mastaba, with sloping sides and flat roof, the pyramid and the rock-hewn tomb. But whatever its form, the tomb had two basic components; the sepulchral chamber or pit, in which the embalmed body was placed, and an adjacent room or rooms where the funerary equipment of the

F. H. C. Birch/Sonia Halliday

Michael Holford

Temple architecture reflects the beliefs of those who worship there *Facing page* In an Egyptian temple worshippers moved gradually from the strong sunlight of the secular world, through the deepening darkness of great halls, into the intense blackness that shrouded the shrine that contained the god's image: one of the pylons at the entrance to the temple of Amun at Karnak *Left* The Acropolis in Athens, dominated by the Parthenon. This temple is a supreme example of the architectural perfection with which the Greeks honoured their gods *Above* Roman temple at Dougga in North Africa *Below* Christian churches were originally functional; contemporary architectural styles were usually followed, and there was little attempt to incorporate specifically Christian symbolism: Byzantine church at Daphni, Greece

A. F. Kersting

Sonia Halliday

deceased was deposited and where food was set for his nourishment. Sometimes this mortuary service was performed in a separate building. The pharaohs of the New Kingdom, who were buried in the remote Valley of the Kings, erected great mortuary temples for this service on the flat land bordering the western bank of the Nile.

The most famous form of Egyptian tomb is the pyramid. There has been much discussion about the origin and significance of the pyramidal shape. Some scholars have argued that the shape gradually evolved from the mastaba via the step-pyramid to the true pyramid, the most notable example of which is the Great Pyramid of Cheops. However, in view of the genius of its architect Imhotep (see IMHOTEP), there is reason for thinking that the step-pyramid embodied a new conception of the pharaoh's tomb. It symbolized the ladder, mentioned in the Pyramid Texts, by which the dead king ascended to heaven. The imagery of the pyramid proper would be a slight variant of this idea. The Pyramid Texts also describe the dead king as ascending to heaven by means of the ramp constituted by the sun's rays. The Egyptians pictured the rays as forming a pyramidal pattern.

The Ark of Yahweh

The Temple of Yahweh at Jerusalem was originally built by Solomon primarily to house the Ark of Yahweh, which had been the portable shrine of the deity's presence during the Israelites' sojourn in the desert. The fact that the Temple faced towards the east has caused some scholars to think that the cult of Yahweh may have had a solar aspect. Like many other contemporary sanctuaries in the Near East, the Jerusalem Temple was basically divided into three parts: an open court and a building consisting of two chambers. The anterior chamber was called *bayith*, 'the house', and it led to the inner chamber, the Holy of Holies. At the centre of this holy place there stood two large figures of cherubim, whose wings overshadowed the Ark of Yahweh.

Among other cultic or symbolic objects in this first Temple was a brazen serpent, Nehushtan, which tradition connected with that set up by Moses for the curing of snakebite (Numbers 21.4-9). On either side

Like early Christian churches, mosques are essentially functional in design *Right* the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, with its six minarets from which the muezzin call the faithful to prayer *Below* The Byzantine influence, combined with a characteristic local style, is revealed in the architecture of the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Assumption in Moscow *Facing page* The Virgin and Child, with angels, look down from heaven, which is represented by the dome: from the former church of St Saviour in Istanbul – originally the Byzantine capital of Constantinople – afterwards turned into a mosque

F. H. C. Birch/Sonia Halliday

G. Cubitt

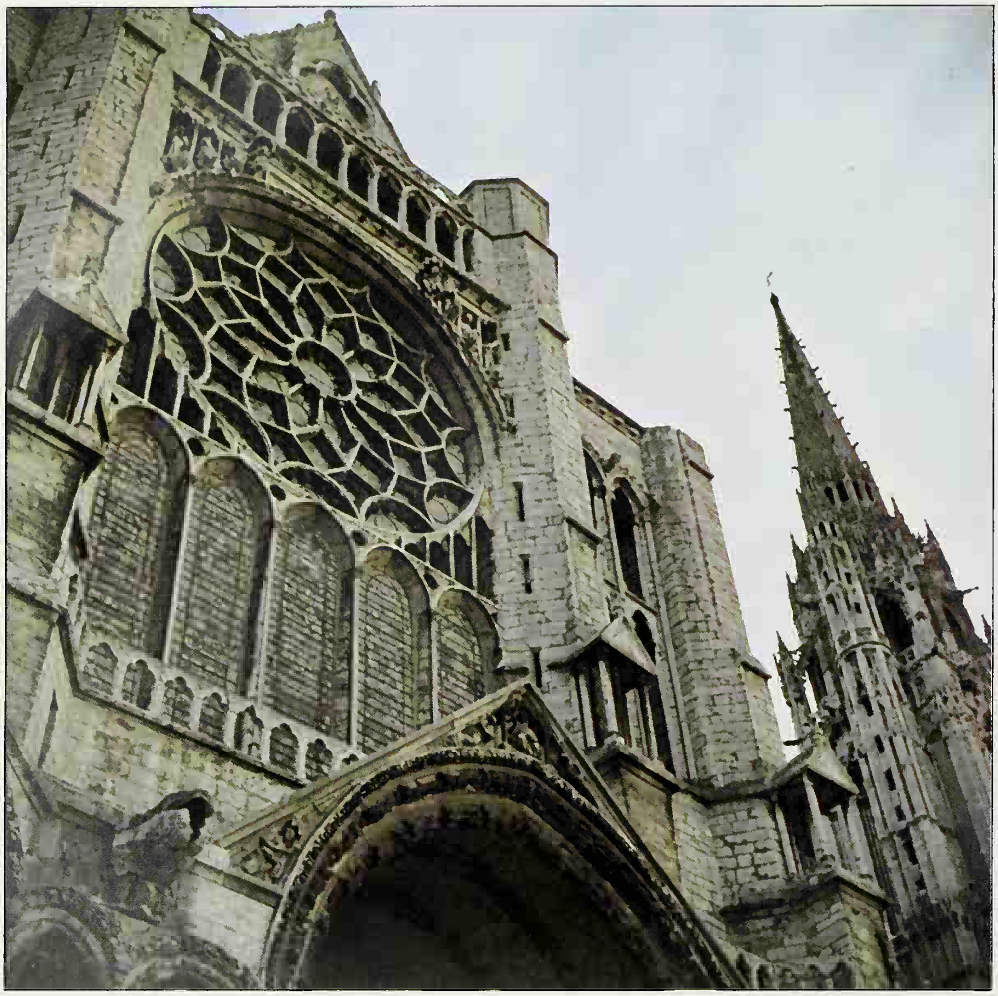
of the porch stood twin pillars of bronze named Jachin and Boas. The purpose of these pillars and their mysterious names have never been satisfactorily explained. Stone or bronze pillars were a feature of many temples in Syria, Phoenicia and Cyprus, and seem to have had a cultic significance. Another unexplained object was 'the brazen sea', a circular basin resting on the backs of 12 bronze oxen, which were in four groups facing the cardinal points. Its significance has been variously interpreted as symbolizing the primeval abyss of the book of Genesis or 'the waters which were above the firmament' (Genesis 1.7).

A Casket for the Image

The Greek temple has been described as a 'casket containing the image'. For this reason attention was concentrated on the architectural perfection and adornment of the exterior of the structure, of which the Parthenon of Athens is the supreme example. The cult image dominated the interior, which was well lighted in contrast to the Egyptian temples. Certain temples varied from the general pattern, most notably that of Demeter at Eleusis. This temple was also the Telesterion, in which the famous Eleusinian Mysteries were performed and so was structurally adapted for the purpose (see DEMETER; ELEUSIS).

Circular temples were occasionally built in the classical world. Some were dedicated to Asclepios, the god of healing (see HEALING GODS). Some notable examples still survive in Rome: the famous Pantheon, which was dedicated to the seven planetary deities and symbolized the all-embracing cosmos, and the so-called Temple of Vesta, whose original dedication is unknown. The real Temple of Vesta was in the Forum, and has been partially restored. Its circular shape was proper to its function as the sacred hearth of the city, whose perpetual fire was tended by the Vestal Virgins.

Mention might also be made here of the cave-sanctuaries of Mithra, for it was in the Roman Empire that the cult of this Iranian deity achieved its greatest influence (see MITHRAS). The *mithraea* were located in natural caves or, where these were not available, in artificially constructed caves. The origin of celebrating the Mithraic rites in caves is not known, but an explanation offered by Euboulos probably represented the current belief. He wrote: 'the cave conveys an image of the cosmos, of which Mithra was the *demiourgos*, and the things at measured intervals within the cave convey symbols of the cosmic elements and



C. M. Dixon

Peter Marsden/Sonia Halliday

Epitomizing the ideals and aspirations of Christianity in the West, the great cathedrals of Europe are designed as settings for the drama of the Mass; this symbolism is as apparent in the Church of the Holy Family, Barcelona (*right*) designed by Gaudi in the 19th century, as in Chartres Cathedral (*left*) built in the 12th and 13th centuries *Below left* Designed to reflect the harmony of the cosmos, the characteristic shape of the Hindu temple, rising to a tapering peak, points to the abode of the gods and also represents Meru, the sacred world mountain: Madivai temple, India

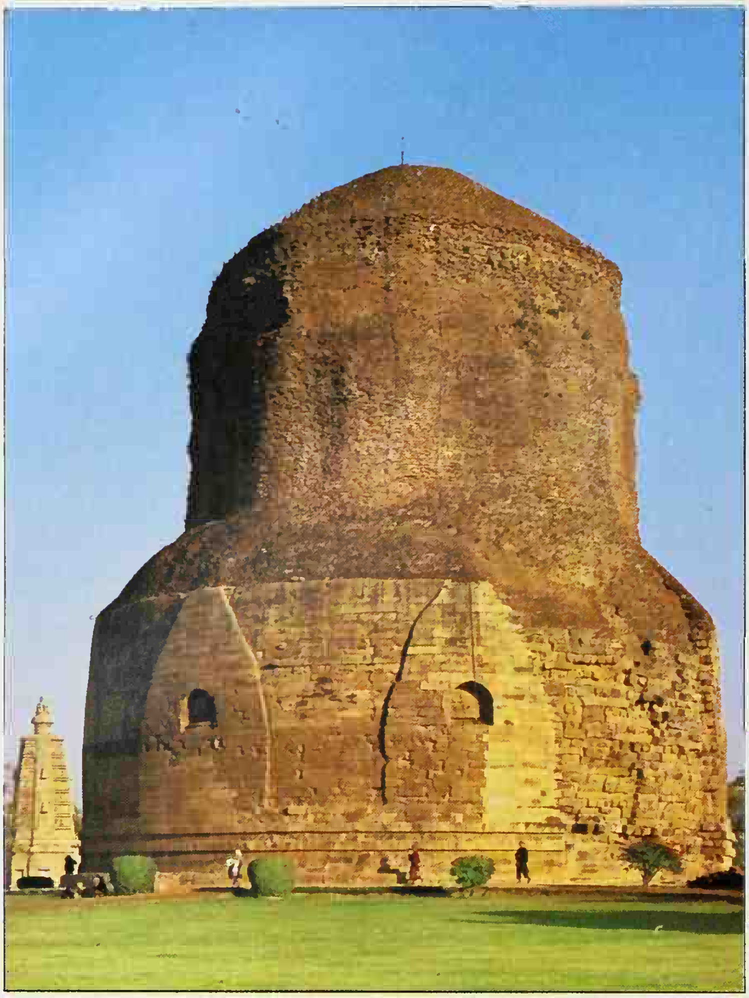
climates.' The chief object, which was situated at the end of the Mithraic cave, was a sculptured representation of Mithra slaying the Cosmic Bull.

The Dome of the Heavens

Christian architecture seems to have been functional in origin; it provided a place where the faithful could assemble for the celebration of the Eucharist and other rites. Indeed, the altar for the Eucharist, and the baptistery (often a separate building) constituted the two basic items that were needed for the ritual practice of Christianity. When it became legally possible in the 4th century for Christians to build churches, contemporary architectural styles were followed. The basilica, with a semicircular end or apse, became the general form of Christian churches. These early buildings incorporated no specific symbolism in their basic architectural plan. Depending on the resources of their communities, the interiors were richly decorated with coloured mosaics depicting sacred figures and biblical scenes.

Sometimes an element of architectural symbolism was introduced by representing the hemispherical dome of the apse as the heavens, against which Christ was portrayed as the Cosmocrator or 'Lord of the universe'. The great dome of Hagia Sophia at Constantinople, the most splendid church of the medieval world, had figures of seraphs to symbolize the Heavenly Temple according to Isaiah's memorable vision: 'I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up... Above him stood the seraphim...' (Isaiah 6.1). The most notable instance of architectural symbolism that developed in Byzantine churches, and has become a feature of Eastern Orthodox churches, is the *iconostasis*. This is a screen, covered with icons, which cuts off the sanctuary from the congregation in the nave. Its doors are closed during the celebration of the Eucharist, symbolizing the holiness of the rites performed inside the sanctuary by the clergy.

The Gothic cathedral epitomized the ideals and aspirations of medieval Christianity in the West. In its structure and decoration it represented the Heavenly Jerusalem. It was designed as a setting for the drama of the Mass, in which was ritually re-enacted the divine mystery of man's salvation by Christ. The High Altar was therefore the focus of attention, and it was set within a harmony of structural lines, symbolizing the perfection of balance that characterized the medieval conception of the universe. This geometrical imagery was



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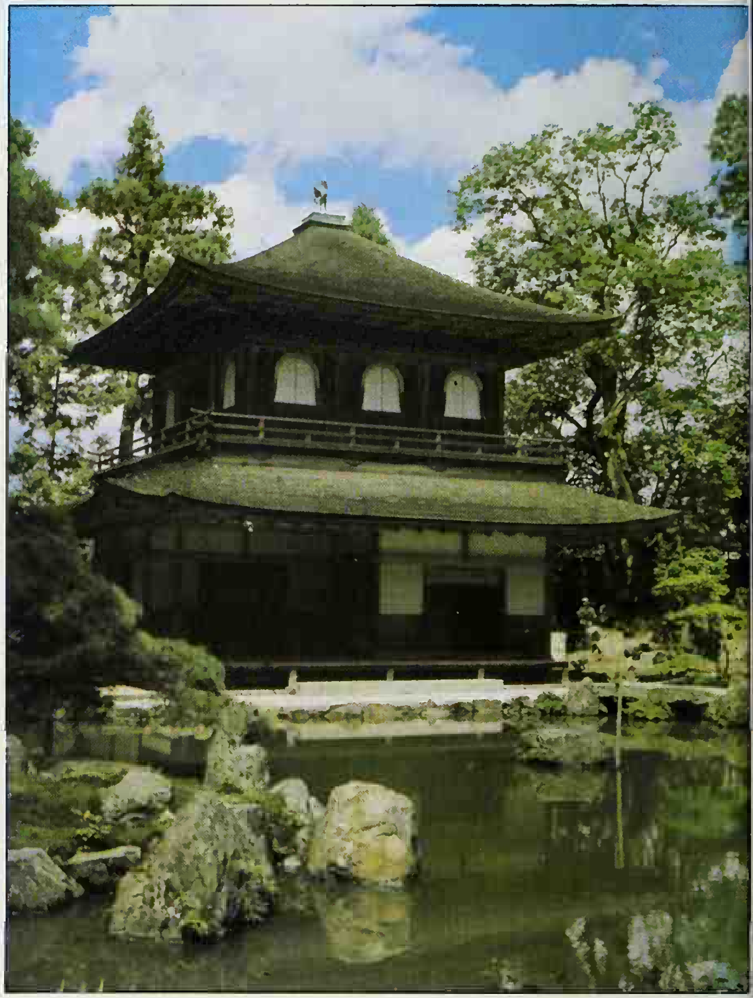

The most characteristic architectural structures of Buddhism, stupas were originally primitive burial mounds built to contain relics; later they were erected to commemorate important events, and even became objects of worship. Over the years each Buddhist country developed an individual style *Left* The Dhamek stupa at Sarnath in India marks the spot where the Buddha preached his first sermon *Right* The Silver Pavilion at Kyoto, Japan

enhanced by the richness of colour provided by hangings and vestments, and by the light streaming through stained-glass windows.

In contrast to the Byzantine church, the Gothic cathedral was designed to enable the faithful to see the ritual presentation of the sacramental body and blood of Christ in circumstances of the utmost solemnity and beauty. But that was not all. The cathedral provided not only the setting appropriate to the divine mystery of the Mass, it also taught the faithful the great truths of their religion. Its sculptures, paintings and coloured glass depicted the incarnation, ascension and majesty of Christ, the coronation of the Virgin Mary, and the Last Judgement.

Built for Function

In Islam the mosque is essentially functional in design. Besides providing shelter for the worshippers, it contains a *mihrab*, usually a beautifully tiled recess in a wall that faces towards Mecca, which indicates the *qibla* or direction in which the faithful must turn in worship. The other important feature is the *minbar* or pulpit, for sermons and other pronouncements. The minaret, the most characteristic external feature of the mosque, is also functional. It provides a point of vantage for the muezzin to call the faithful to prayer. The number of minarets denotes the status of the mosque concerned. The great sanctuary of Islam is the Kaaba at Mecca, a cubic edifice draped with a rich cl[illegible]hich contains the mysterious Black St[illegible]his is the chief object of veneration for the faithful who make the pilgrimage to the holy city of Mohammed (see MECCA).

The Harmony of the Cosmos

Not only does the Hindu temple house the image of the deity to whom it is dedicated, but it is also regarded as partaking in itself of the substance of the god. Elaborate rites are prescribed to ensure that the site chosen is auspicious. The plan is laid out in a square, conceived in terms of the imagined shape of the world, with Brahma located at its centre. Like the Gothic cathedral, it was designed to reflect the harmony of the cosmos. Its characteristic shape, rising to the tapering *sikhara*, 'mountain-peak', both points to the traditional abode of the gods and represents Meru, the sacred world mountain. The metaphysical laws governing the building of a temple were the first principles learned by apprentices to the builders' craft, which was organized in guilds on a hereditary basis.

Buddhist architecture also was inspired by cosmological symbolism. The *stupa*, which was originally a burial mound used to enshrine relics of the Buddha, became itself an object of worship. It was mystically conceived of as a kind of architectural body symbolizing the body which the Buddha had abandoned when he entered Nirvana. Wedded to this mystical conception was a complex cosmological imagery based upon the alternation of square and circle in the stupa's plan. Rising from the top of the mound was a series of circular umbrellas, as seen at the Great Stupa of Sanchi in India, which symbolized the *devalokas* or heavens of the gods, culminating with that of Brahma. The supreme example of Buddhist architectural symbolism is the great stupa of Barabudur in Java. It has been described as 'a magic replica of the universe', and as the pilgrim ascends its galleries human destiny is portrayed in a series of reliefs depicting the career of a Bodhisattva.

S.G.F. BRANDON

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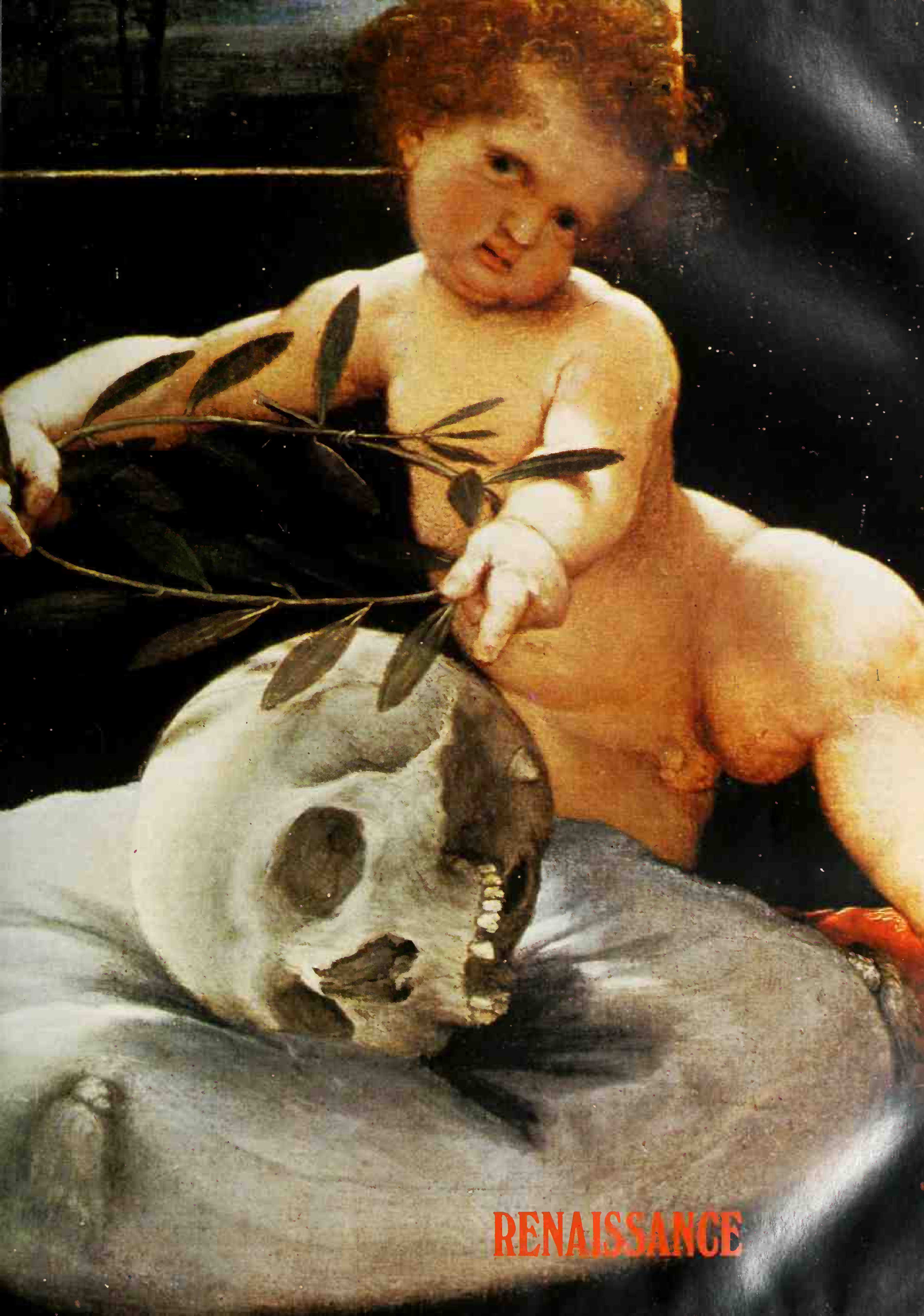

RENAISSANCE

The art and culture of the Renaissance contained powerful strands of paganism and magic, drawn from the civilization of late antiquity to which scholars and artists longingly looked back

RENAISSANCE

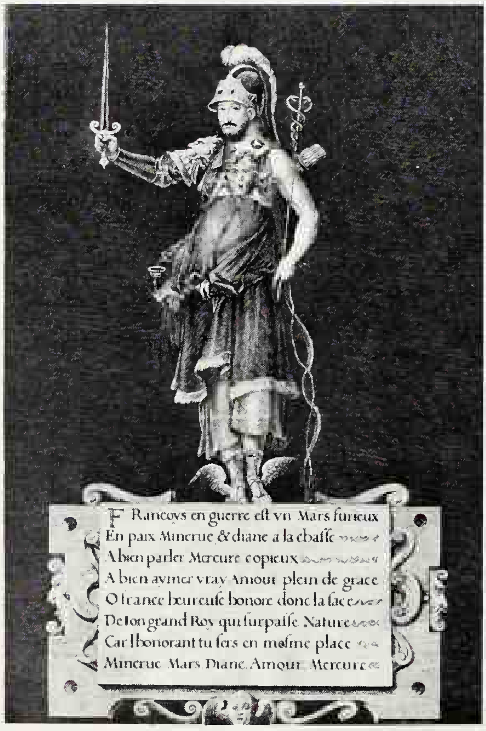
'THERE IS this diversity between God and man, that God contains in himself all things because he is their source, and man contains all things because he is their centre.' This pronouncement by the Italian philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–94) is a statement of Renaissance 'humanism', a word which has many shades of meaning but which basically implies a firm confidence in the worth, dignity and abilities of man, a view of man as something very close to a god. In the Renaissance context, a humanist also means someone passionately addicted to the civilization of Greece and Rome, looking back to it for truth and beauty rather than to a medieval culture dismissed as dark and barbarous, Gothic in the bad sense. The term 'Middle Ages' itself contains this implication, stemming mainly from the Florentine historian Flavio Biondo, who used it for the 1000 years between the submergence of classical culture under the floodtides of barbarism in the 5th century and its rebirth in the 15th.

Renaissance humanists believed that the myths and legends of the ancient world, however unedifying they might seem on the surface, concealed profound truths which had been cloaked in fable to hide them from the common herd, 'showing only the crust of the mysteries to the vulgar,' as Pico said, 'while reserving the marrow of the true sense for higher and more perfect spirits.' If you were a higher and more perfect spirit, you might discern the same mysteries behind the Jewish tradition as well. Why had God taken 40 days to deliver the law and commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus, chapter 24), a transaction which could have been more expeditiously dispatched? Because God had also communicated to Moses all sorts of secrets, not suitable for vulgar ears and passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation of the wise ever since. These were the secrets of the Cabala, and they were essentially the same as those concealed in the hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt and the myths of Mesopotamia, in Plato and the Neoplatonists, in the Pythagorean tradition and the Orphic hymns and the Hermetica (see CABALA; HERMETICA; NEOPLATONISM; ORPHEUS; PYTHAGORAS).

This enticing conclusion was assisted by confusion about dates and influences. The belief that Hebrew was the earliest of tongues, the language of God himself (see ALPHABET), helped to suggest that, just as all other languages must be descended from it, so all other valid insights into truth must be descended from the revelation in Hebrew. Writings really or allegedly stemming from Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, Plato, were all indiscriminately dated after Moses and the Old Testament writers and were believed to have been influenced by them. Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522), Christian cabalist and notable promoter of Greek studies in Germany, thought that Pythagoras drew his doctrine from the Cabala and equated the Pythagorean Tetractys with the Jewish Tetragrammaton, the great mystic name of God (see NAMES; NUMEROLOGY). Plato was dated after the Hermetica, by which he was supposed to have been influenced, and when a more accurate date was established for the Hermetica, by Isaac Casaubon in 1614, writers like Robert Fludd (see FLUDD) ignored it.

Renaissance scholars were helped to find common threads of doctrine beneath the surface of different traditions by the fact that their sources were generally late and did in reality contain important ideas in common. Their Platonism was largely Neoplatonism and Professor Wind has remarked of one of the most influential of them, Marsilio Ficino (1433–99), that he read Plato with the eyes of Plotinus. The Cabala, the Hermetica and much Pythagorean, Orphic and gnostic lore came to them from the last centuries of antiquity or later. Typically, Ficino and his friends at the Academy founded at Florence in imitation of Plato's Academy at Athens (they kept Plato's supposed birthday as a holiday) drew their interpretation of Egyptian hieroglyphics from a late work, the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollo Niliacus, an obscure Alexandrian author, not earlier than the 2nd century AD. The manuscript had been discovered on a Greek island in 1419 by a priest who brought it back to Florence.

One of the themes which fascinated Renaissance artists and philosophers was the reconciliation of opposites in a higher unity *Previous page* Painting by Lorenzo Lotto, now in Alnwick Castle: a cherub crowns with an evergreen wreath a skull resting on a soft cushion, reconciling death and love, mortality and immortality *Below* Francis I of France as a hermaphrodite, uniting male and female


FRancoys en guerre eſt vn Mars furieux
En paix Minerue & diane a la chaſſe
A bien parler Mercure copieux
A bien aymer vray Amour plein de grace
O france heureuſe honore donc la face
De ton grand Roy qui ſurpaſſe Nature
Car l'honorant tu ſers en meſme place
Minerue Mars Diane Amour Mercure

Bibliothèque Nationale Paris

In delving into all these mysteries the humanists were not in most cases seeking to attack Christianity, quite the contrary. They believed that the wisdom of antiquity had heralded and foreshadowed the sublime truths of Christian doctrine. Ficino said that Plato 'together with the Pythagorean and Socratic doctrines, followed the law of Moses and prophesied the Christian law.' And they could find a highly respectable warrant for this view in a passage of St Augustine: 'The thing itself, which is now called the Christian religion, was with the ancients, and it was with the human race from its beginning to the time when Christ appeared in the flesh: from when on the true religion, which already existed, began to be called the Christian.'

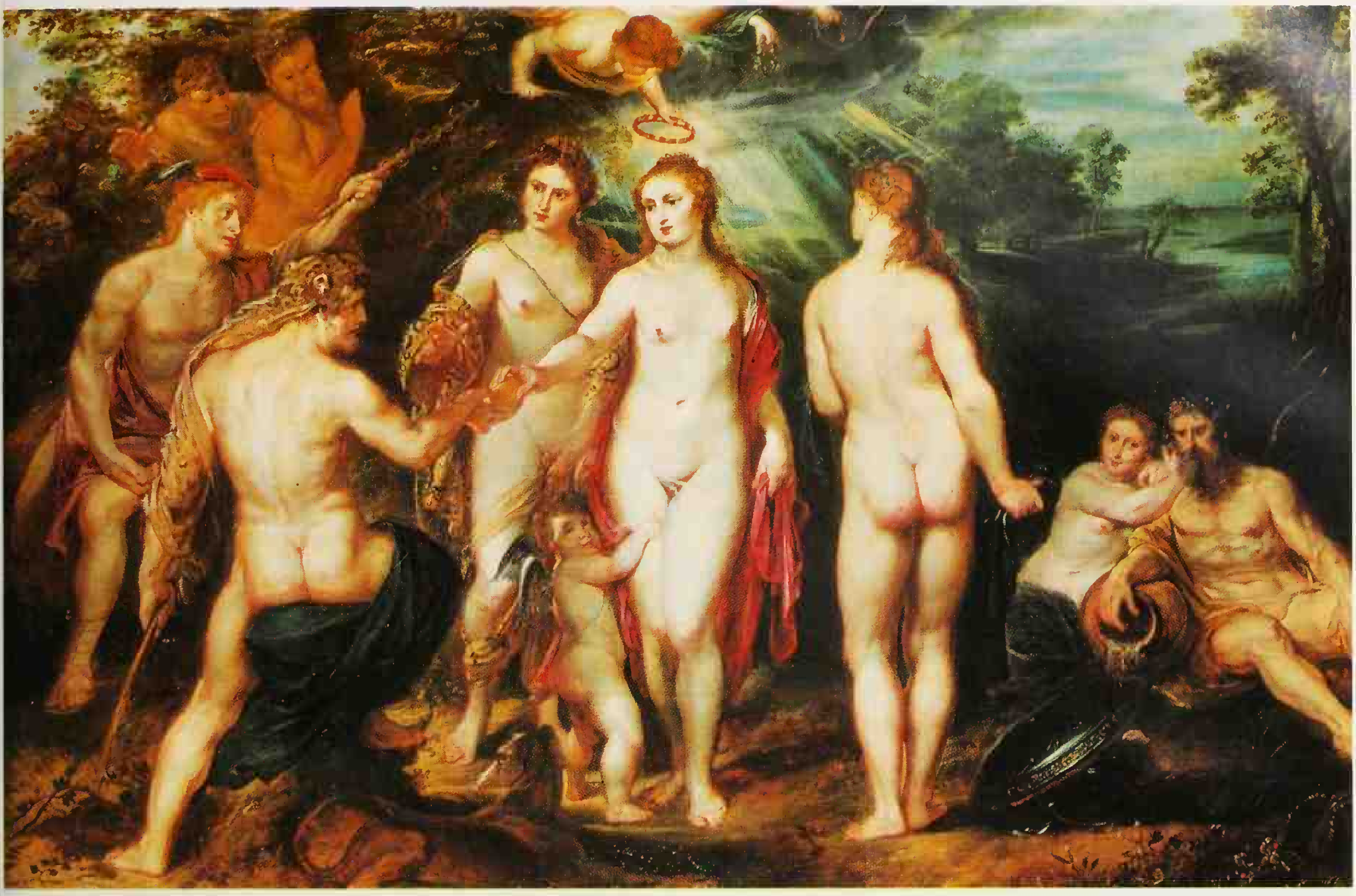
The humanist preoccupation was to reconcile paganism and Christianity by isolating 'the true religion' which had been 'with the human race from its beginning'. But in the process they revealed a God whose features were not as Christian as conservative churchmen would have preferred, and their relationships with the Church were uneasy. Popes and prelates who were themselves highly educated men, well-read in the classics and enthusiastic antiquarians, alive to the splendours and beauties of the pagan tradition, were half inclined to approve and half to condemn. Pico, for instance, framed his opinions in 900 theses, 13 of which were condemned by Pope Innocent VIII, but he was cleared of all imputation of heresy six years later by Alexander VI.

Apollo Into Christ

The Renaissance was not a sudden break in the continuity of history. The pagan gods and heroes had survived all through the Middle Ages as demons, planetary powers or great mortals, rulers and sages of long ago, benefactors of humanity and bestowers of civilization. The Renaissance inherited the belief that peoples or ruling families were descended from these heroic ancestors. In the 15th century the Dukes of Burgundy prided themselves on their descent from Hercules. In the 1490s Alexander VI, the Borgia pope, whose heraldic animal was the bull, had his apartments in the Vatican decorated with scenes including the story of the Egyptian sacred bull Apis, with the implication that the Borgias were descended from Apis and had inherited from him the fierce vigour which had raised them to the summit of Christendom.

The gods remained alive in astrology, because of their connection with the planets through which, under God, they influenced the lives and fortunes of men. All through the Middle Ages and Renaissance churchmen, though frequently uneasy about astrology, generally tolerated it, and sometimes patronized it. Pope Julius II fixed the date of his coronation on astrological advice and Leo X founded a university chair in astrology.

The later pagan writers themselves had brought the old myths up to date by searching out hidden meanings. The Roman historian Sallust (1st century BC), for example, interpreted the savage tale of Attis and Cybele (see CYBELE) as an object



National Gallery, London

The Judgement of Paris, **by Rubens: this episode from Greek mythology was interpreted as a case of the One revealing itself through its three component parts, the opposites and their common centre, the three goddesses standing for the goals of wisdom, power and pleasure, or for the contemplative, active and passive**

lesson on the trials which the soul must suffer in its search for God. Christian authors followed suit and also applied the technique to the Bible, seeing in the passionate lovers of the Song of Solomon the figures of Christ and his Bride, the Church. In the 12th century John of Salisbury anticipated the Renaissance attitude by thinking pagan religion worthy of study, 'not out of any respect for false deities but because under cover of words truths are hidden which may not be revealed to the vulgar.'

Reinterpretation of pagan literature could produce curious results. Ovid's *Art of Love* suffered a sea-change into a primer of spiritual devotion, and as such was piously studied by nuns in 13th century convents. In an anonymous poem of c 1300, *Ovide moralisé,* Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was transformed into a collection of fables anticipating Christianity, with Diana as the Trinity, Actaeon as Jesus, Phaethon who stole the sun's chariot as Lucifer, and Ceres searching for Proserpine as the Church seeking for souls strayed from the true path. In Alciati's *Emblematum liber* (1531) the handsome youth Ganymede, who in classical mythology was carried off by Zeus in homosexual mood, has turned into a symbol of the pure soul which finds joy in God, and a later commentator even applied Christ's command to 'Suffer little children to come unto me' to the story.

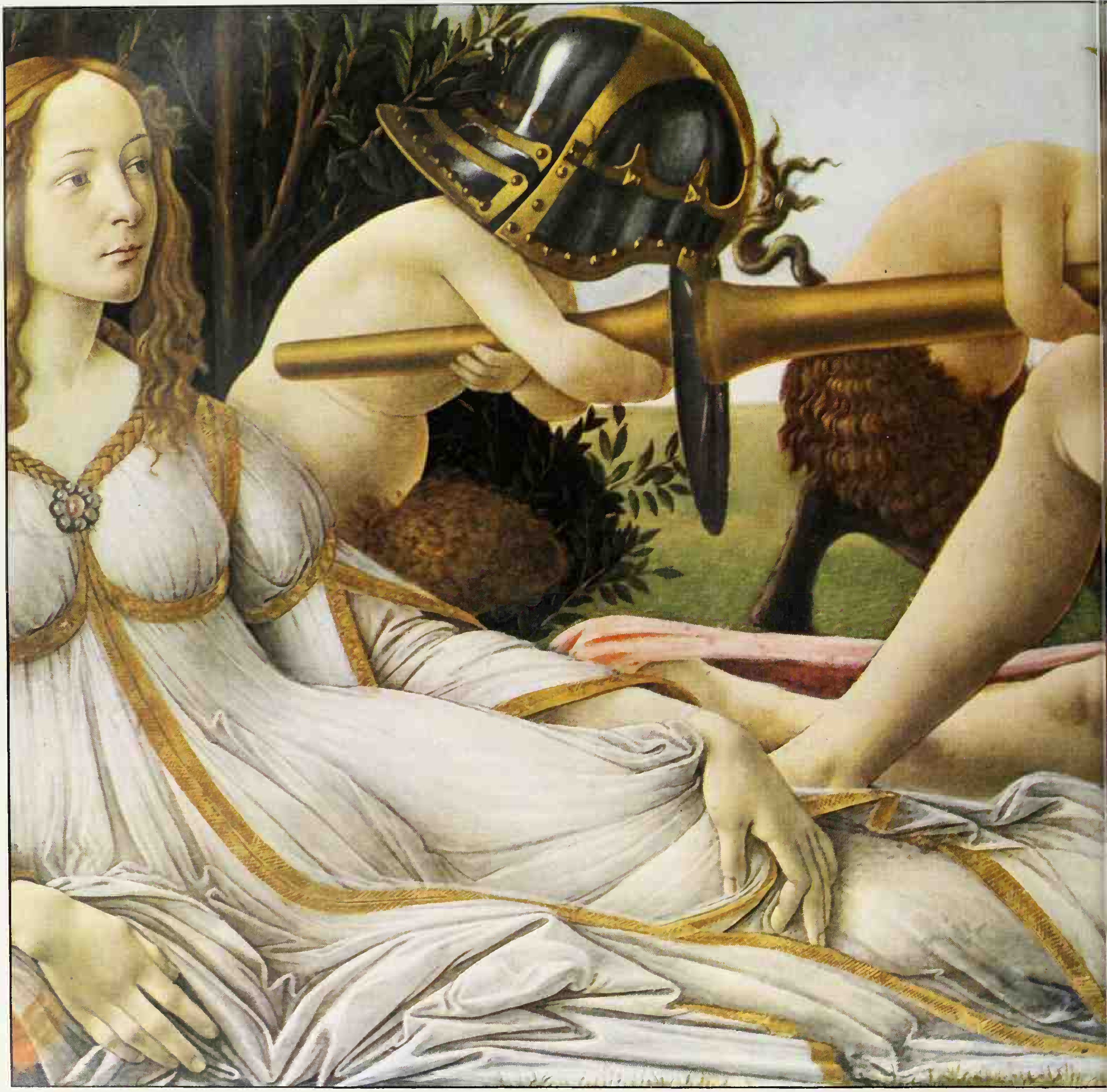
Some Christians objected. Martin Luther denounced those 'who turn Apollo into Christ and Daphne into the Virgin Mary'.

In the mid-15th century the church of San Francesco in Rimini was decorated with sculptures and bas-reliefs of the Virtues and Liberal Arts, the Prophets and Sibyls, the signs of the zodiac and the planetary gods, not assembled as in the Middle Ages to show all these elements in their place in the Christian scheme of things but to show them in worshipful and protective attendance on the lord of Rimini, Sigismondo Malatesta, a ruthless, learned and profligate soldier of fortune. The church had been turned into a temple to his glory and Pope Pius II accused him of having paganized it. 'The cult that actually is celebrated in these precincts,' says Professor Seznec, 'is not that of Christ. It resembles rather the worship which Rome once offered to her human idols — Augustus, Faustina, or Caesar.'

The Architecture of Man

Though Christian themes greatly outnumber pagan themes in Renaissance art and though pagan themes were frequently given a Christian interpretation — the Roman triumph as anticipating the triumph of Christ or the Church, or pagan sacrifices as foreshadowings of the sacrifice of Christ — it remains true that Renaissance artists rediscovered classical style and depicted pagan gods and myths with a powerful, sensuous realism which breathed into them new and vigorous life. The semi-pagan value given to the human body, to man as the centre of all things, also appears in Renaissance architecture, which again looked back to classical models and which has been described by Professor Wittkower (in *The New Cambridge Modern History*) as anthropomorphic and anthropometric. 'Anthropomorphic, because these architects, thinking in terms of a new organic conception of nature, claimed that the parts of a building must be related to each other and to the whole like the members of the human body; and anthropometric, because it was the metrical relationships of the human body on which their interest was focused. The Bible taught them that man was created by divine will in the image of God, and Neoplatonism that perfect proportions in man reflect something of the harmony of the universe. Man's proportions, therefore, should be the norm for man-made buildings.'

The only ancient work on architecture that had survived was that of Vitruvius (1st century AD), which showed that a man's body, with arms and legs extended, fitted into both a square and a circle. Since the circle could stand for God, because it has no beginning or end, and the four-sided square for solidity, the created world, the diagram was taken as a demonstration of the theory of macrocosm and microcosm, that man is a



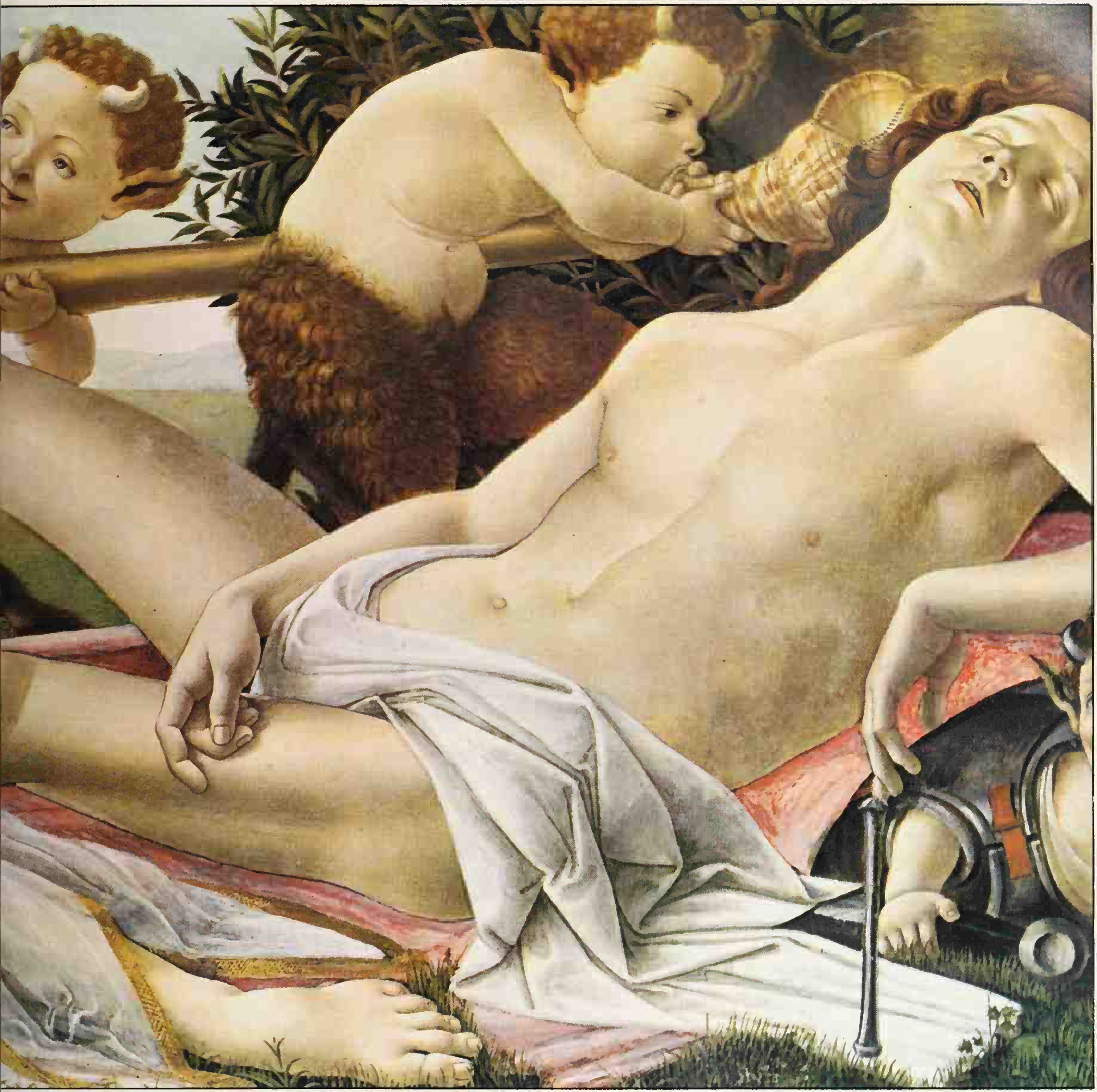
miniature replica of the universe and of God. This theory justified views of man as the container of all things and the measure of all things, and as potentially divine (see MACROCOSM).

As a symbol of both God and man the circle came into architecture in the centralized church. It was a rejection of the medieval longitudinal church, designed to lead the worshipper towards the high altar placed at one end, for the focal point was now in the middle, to demonstrate both the Oneness and the all-pervadingness of the infinite God and the cardinal importance of man standing at the centre. The great architect Bramante planned the new St Peter's, Rome, as basically an equal-armed cross with an apse at the end of each arm, so symmetrical that there is no way of telling from the plan which apse was to hold the high altar. The plan was approved by Pope Julius II, a remarkable example of ecclesiastical acceptance of the new ideas.

Renaissance architects looked back to Roman models in what Wittkower has called 'an almost magical act of identification through which they hoped to recapture something of the greatness of bygone days', and centrally planned buildings could carry uncomfortably non-Christian connotations. In 1444 Michelozzo di Bartolommeo began to add to the church of the Annunziata in Florence a circular east end which was a copy of a temple of Minerva in Rome. Of another centralized church, Alberti's San Sebastiano in Mantua, a cardinal wrote in 1473 that he could not see whether it was going to be a church, a mosque or a synagogue. Central planning could also be turned to the glorification of a 'human idol'. Antonio Filarete, a 15th century Florentine artist who worked for Francesco Sforza of Milan, another notable Renaissance strong man, planned an ideal town to be called Sforzinda. It was to have an entirely symmetrical plan in the form of an octagon, with the prince's palace and the cathedral on a square at the centre, from which the streets would radiate.

Concordant Discord

The fact that the God of Christianity is both One and Three excited humanist interest in pagan groupings of three and in the numerological theory of 3 as a pair of



National Gallery, London

Love and violence, two opposites united in *Mars and Venus,* by Botticelli: the love goddess has put the war god to sleep and baby satyrs use his weapons as toys, but the element of hostility remains present in the wasps round his head

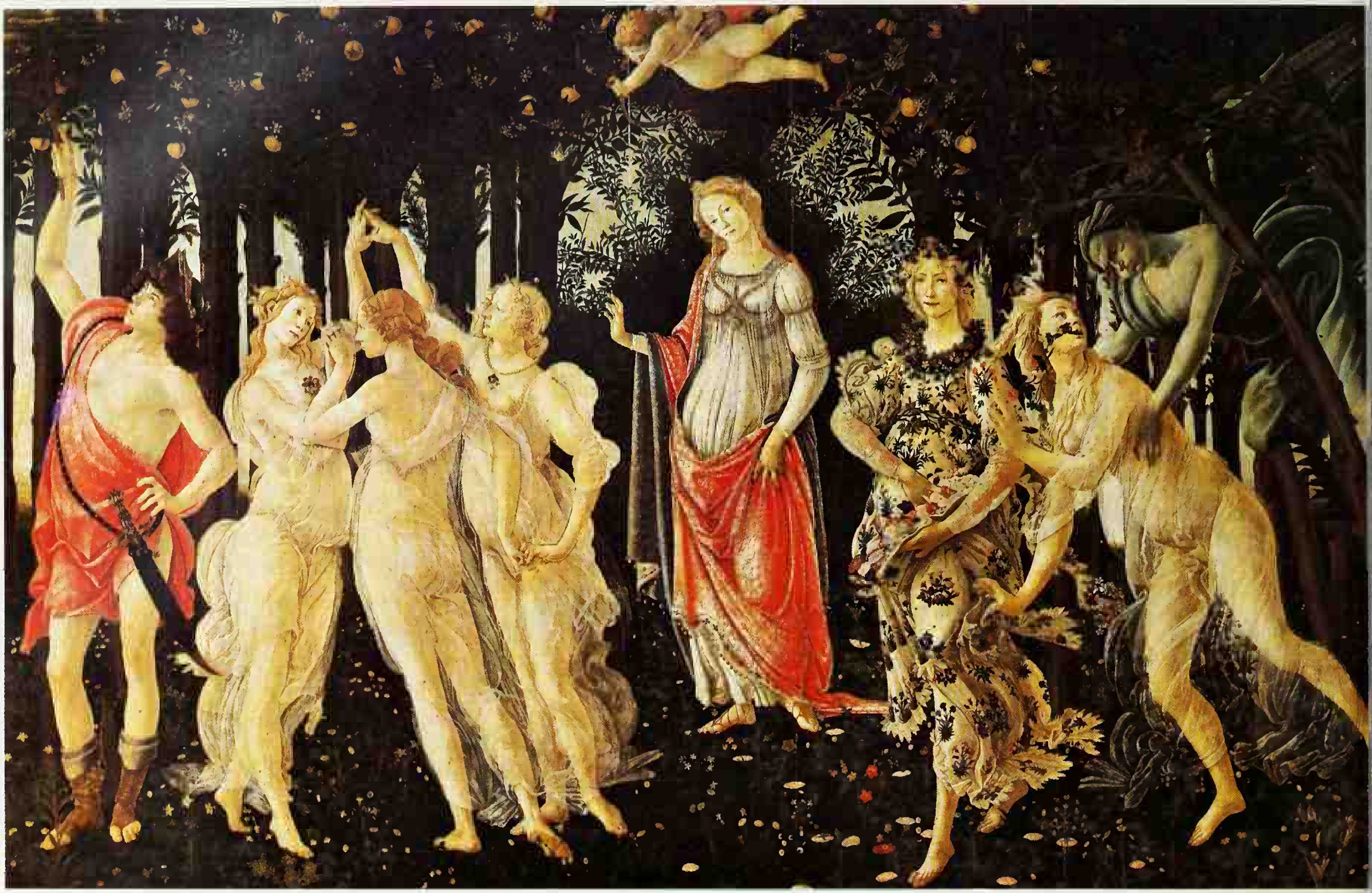
opposites with the unity that reconciles and transcends them (see also THREE). A passion for opposites and their reconciliation is characteristic of Renaissance humanist thinking, and lies behind Pico's love of splendidly paradoxical utterance, as in 'Let us enter into the light of ignorance and, blinded by the darkness of the divine splendour, exclaim with the prophet: I fainted in thy halls, O Lord', or in his 'true definition of Beauty' as 'nothing else than an amicable enmity and a concordant discord'.

That classical paganism had grasped this essential truth about the nature of things was shown by the myth that the war god Mars and love goddess Venus had a daughter named Harmony, a higher unity created by a conjunction of opposites. Many Renaissance paintings are exercises on this theme, including *Veronese's Mars and Venus United By Love* (see MARS) and Botticelli's *Mars and Venus*, in which love has lulled the fierce war god to sleep and his weapons have become toys for infant satyrs. But wasps are buzzing angrily round his head, to keep the element of hostility present in the equation of 'amicable enmity'.

In Spenser's *Faerie Queen* (book 4) the goddess of Concord is escorted by Love and Hate, who are brothers, and the statue of Venus is hermaphroditic – 'she hath both kinds in one, both male and female, both under one name'. And alchemy with its conjunctions and sacred marriages, its processes of separating out and reuniting opposites, was flourishing in the Renaissance period.

Another example of the liking for opposites conjoined is the maxim *festina lente*, 'make haste slowly', which had the classical prestige of having been the motto of the Emperor Augustus. Many princely families adopted it as a badge and it was represented in contradictory images: a dolphin twined round an anchor for instance, a sail fastened to a column, a butterfly and a crab (as on coins of Augustus), an eagle and a lamb, a lynx blindfolded, a tortoise flying a sail.

If the One unites opposites, then conversely



Botticelli's *Primavera*, in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence: the painting has been called a talisman of Venus, a magical device for capturing in the mind the influences of harmony, beauty and love associated with Venus as goddess and planet; on the right, the wind of spring, Zephyr, embraces the shy earth nymph, Chloris, and turns her into Flora, the blossoming flowers of spring

it reveals itself by manifesting its component parts, the opposites and their common centre. An example of this in classical mythology was taken to be the Judgement of Paris (see APPLE), with the three goddesses standing for three kinds of life – contemplative, active and passive – or for three human goals – wisdom, power and pleasure.

Another triad of this sort, much favoured by Renaissance artists, was the classical image of the three Graces, who appear in Botticelli's *Primavera*. It is impossible to do justice in brief to Professor Wind's fascinating analysis of this painting but its most obvious features are the triads on either side of Venus (who has very much the look of a Madonna). The Graces are interlaced in the knot of a maze-like dance and, at the other side, the wind of spring, Zephyr, touches the chaste earth nymph Chloris, who turns into Flora, the flowers of spring, an allusion to a story in Ovid's *Fasti* and a demonstration of the fruitful union of the opposites of maidenly purity and ardent love.

A Talisman of Venus

The *Primavera* has been described as a talisman of Venus, a magical device for capturing in the mind the influences of harmony, beauty and love associated with Venus as goddess and planet. Albrecht Dürer's *Melancolia* (see MAGIC SQUARES) represents the contemplative and scholarly [illegible] those much influenced by the gloomy planet Saturn, with the magic square of Jupiter, [illegible] planet of health and good spirits, added as a corrective. Dürer was influenced by Marsilio Ficino, who in turn was influenced by the *Picatrix*, an earlier magical textbook (see PICATRIX) which recommended the use of images symbolic of the planets to draw down and focus their forces.

Ficino was deeply conscious of Saturn's influence on his own personality. His medical work, *Libri de Vita* (1489) is described by Frances Yates as 'intended primarily for students who are liable through over-intense application to their studies to grow ill or melancholy. This is because the nature of their occupations brings them under the influence of Saturn, for contemplation and hard abstract study belong to Saturn who is also the planet of the melancholy temperament, and the star which is inimical to the vital forces of life and youth. Melancholy students who have used up their vital powers in their studies, and the old in whom these forces are in any case declining, are therefore advised to avoid as far as possible plants, herbs, animals, stones, and the like belonging to Saturn, and to use and surround themselves with plants, herbs, animals, stones, people, belonging to the more fortunate, cheerful, and life-giving planets, of which the chief are Sol (the sun), Jupiter, and Venus.' Ficino goes on, though with some hesitation, to recommend the use of symbolic pictures: to induce happiness and physical strength, for example, 'an image of a young Venus, holding apples and flowers, and dressed in white and yellow'.

Less hesitant was Giordano Bruno, burned alive at Rome in 1600 as a heretic and magician (see BRUNO), who recommended pictures of this sort for drawing planetary influences down into the mind by imagining them with vivid concentration. The *Occult Philosophy* of Cornelius Agrippa (see AGRIPPA) lists astrological images, derived from *Picatrix*, as suitable for engraving on talismans, and the 'Fourth Book' added to it describes the spirits of the planets in much the same way. Similarly, the grimoires, especially the *Lemegeton* (see GRIMOIRE), describe the appearance of spirits and demons, presumably as an aid to summoning each of them by concentrating on a mental picture of it.

Belief in 'natural magic', the occult powers concealed in animals, herbs, stones, numbers and all other phenomena of the world, could be justified from the theory of macrocosm and microcosm, the view of the universe as a gigantic human organism, alive in every part of its being and forming an orderly whole. Bruno said in his *Spaccio della bestia trionfante* (1584) that: 'God as a whole (though not totally but in some more in some less excellently) is in all things. For Mars is more efficaciously in natural vestiges and modes of substance, in a viper or a scorpion, nay even in an onion or garlic, than in any inanimate picture or statue. Thus one should think of Sol as being in a crocus, a daffodil, a sunflower, in the cock, in the lion . . . For as the divinity descends in a certain manner inasmuch as it communicates itself to nature, so there is an ascent made to the divinity through nature. Thus through the light which shines in natural things one mounts up to the life which presides over them.'

This mounting up to the divine could be a devoutly mystical ascent to union with the supreme One or it could be a magical assault on the heights of supreme power, and the distinction might not be easy to draw. If God is man writ large, the spiritual way is open for man to lose himself within the godhead or masterfully to assert the godhead that is within him. Paul Ricci, who taught at Pavia University, said the lore of the Cabala teaches man how to attain to his god-like prerogatives on earth. Reuchlin said that the cabalist could force the angels to do his bidding. The grimoires show the magician mastering good and evil spirits alike, and Agrippa, not very surprisingly, was rumoured to be in league with the powers of evil. The Faust legend (see FAUST; PACT) was as much a product of the Renaissance as a Michelangelo or a Raphael, and Marlowe put in the mouth of his Faust a statement of the prospect which a humanist view of man could open up: 'A sound magician is a mighty god'.

(See also DEE; PARACELSUS; ROSICRUCIANS).

RICHARD CAVENDISH

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Following an outbreak of alleged demoniacal possession among the nuns of a German convent, the elderly sub-prioress, who had given her life to her order for half a century, was put on trial and condemned as a witch

SISTER MARIA RENATA

THE CASE of Sister Maria Renata Sanger von Mossau (1679–1749) follows the pattern of, and should be considered in conjunction with, similar cases in the convents of Loudun, Louviers and one or two other places. Some nuns in an enclosed convent are found to be possessed; more or less successful attempts are made at exorcism and in the end a scapegoat is found (generally the convent chaplain or spiritual director) who is charged with bewitching the nuns. The case ends with the execution of the sorcerer. (See also AIX-EN-PROVENCE NUNS; AUXONNE NUNS; GRANDIER.)

The case involving Sister Renata differs from that of Loudun in that here the spiritual director was one of the prosecutors and the sub-prioress of the convent was the victim. Since it occurred in the middle of the 18th century it is one of the last cases of its kind, though the barbaric cruelty which occurred and the credulity and religious fanaticism displayed are certainly no less than in the previous cases of a little over a century before.

Sister Renata was sub-prioress of the Premonstratensian convent of Unterzell near Wurzburg in Germany. She had entered the convent at the age of 19, so that by the time of her death, when she had been sub-prioress for some five years or more, she had given her life to the convent for half a century.

'Cramps and Contortions'

The trouble began with the entry of a certain Cecilia Pistorini as a novice. She belonged to an Italian family living in Hamburg. Sister Renata was by no means convinced of the girl's suitability for life in the convent, but in spite of this Cecilia became a nun in 1745. The real trouble was that Sister Cecilia was prone, as one authority puts it, to 'cramps and contortions and hallucinations'. In other words she writhed on the ground, foamed at the mouth, cried out during services in church, and in short gave every conventional sign of being possessed by the Devil. Other nuns became afflicted in the same way – or copied Sister Cecilia – and soon after 1745 it appeared that the convent was suffering from an epidemic of demoniacal possession.

Sister Renata had been opposed to Sister Cecilia's joining the community; she considered that the young woman was very hysterical and suffered from delusions. And it is very possible that Sister Renata also viewed somewhat sceptically the manifestations produced by the other nuns. At all events a conflict existed and Sister Renata was regarded unfavourably by some of the nuns. The climax came when one of the older nuns, on her deathbed, accused Sister Renata of having bewitched her. So public an accusation, made at so solemn a moment, could not be allowed to pass unnoticed. The prioress, the chaplain, and Loschert, the Abbot of Oberzell, under whose jurisdiction the nuns were, felt obliged to take action and Sister Renata was put on trial as a witch.

Meanwhile an attempt was being made to rid the afflicted nuns of the devils possessing them. Exorcisms and penitential exercises of various kinds were held, but without effect; it seemed that short of Sister Renata's confession, conviction and execution there was no chance of freeing the convent from the unpleasant visitations of the devils.

A Nun's Yellow Dress

The sub-prioress was imprisoned and her room at the convent searched. Ointments were found and collections of herbs, and a yellow dress. All these were held to be evidence against her. The herbs were said to be poisonous, the ointments salves used in witchcraft, and the yellow dress the robe used for her visits to the witches' sabbath.

Sister Renata's trial for witchcraft in 1749 came after several months in prison and a long series of interrogations which for the most part were conducted under torture. The full confession that was obtained can thus hardly be said to be voluntary or of any value.

Her confession went back to the age of eight when she had given herself to the Devil; in her teens she had led a life of debauchery and at 19, on Satan's orders, had entered the convent at Unterzell with the express purpose of bringing about its ruin. As a nun she had gone out frequently to the sabbath dressed in the yellow robe and riding on a broomstick. She had sexual intercourse with devils and had renounced God and the Church. Lastly, she had bewitched six nuns and had desecrated the host.

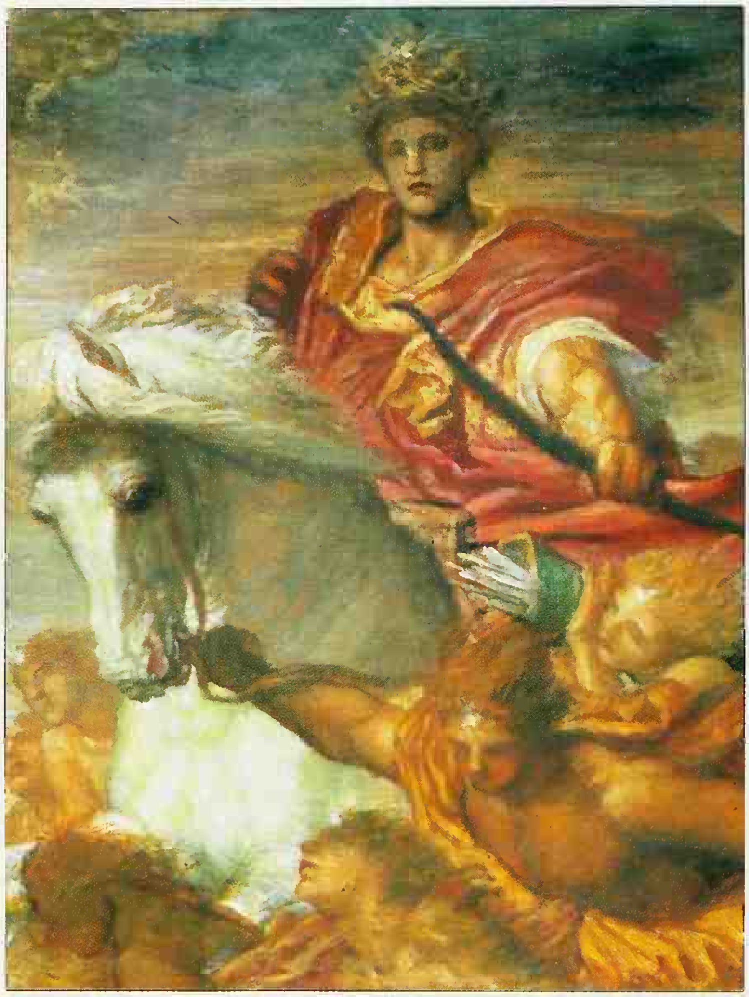
Sister Renata was condemned for sorcery, heresy and apostasy by a court composed of Abbot Loschert, the convent chaplain and two Jesuits. The bishop of Würzburg, in confirming the verdict, ordered her to be defrocked and to be burnt as a witch, but on account of her tender years when she first fell a victim to the Devil, she was allowed to be executed first before being burnt. The sentence was carried out in June 1749. After beheading her body was burnt, and during the burning a sermon was preached by a Jesuit, Father George Gaar, justifying the execution.

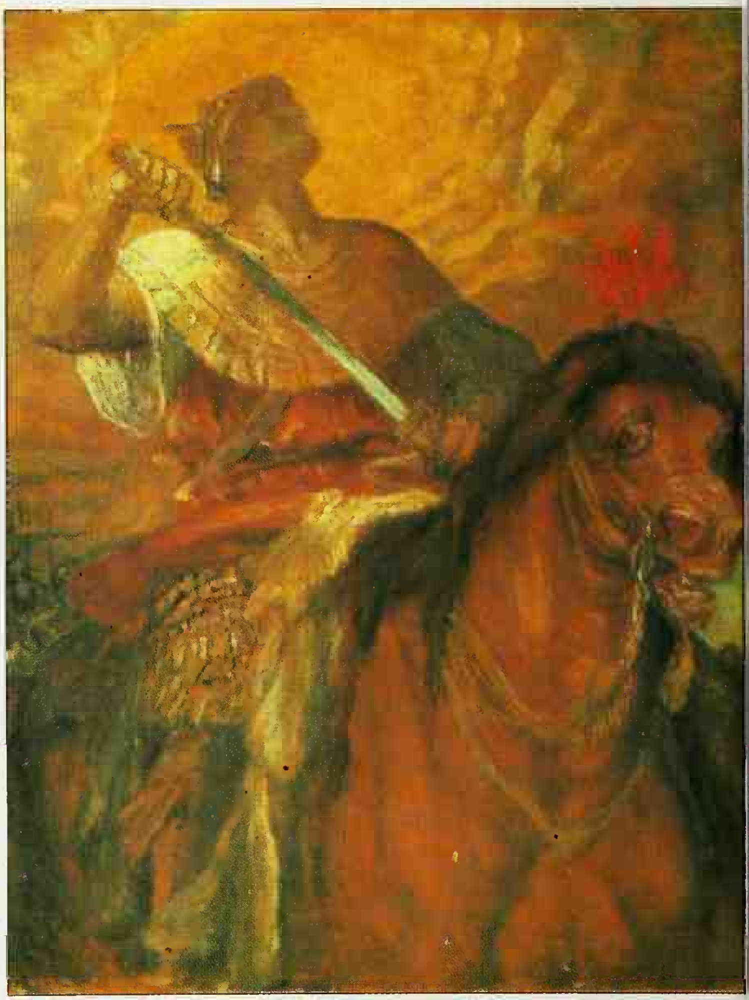
Unlike similar trials in the past, this one did not lead to an epidemic of witch-hunting in convents; in other respects the case is typical of what occurred when a convent was 'bewitched' or some members of it became 'possessed'. This could quite easily happen among young nuns of a hysterical nature, bound to a life forbidding any sexual outlet whatever, and steeped in a view of religion which was bound up with all sorts of superstition.

In the Loudun case it was a priest who suffered as a result, at Unterzell it was a nun who apparently was innocent of anything except endeavouring to prevent an undesirable candidate from entering the convent. This of course is surmise, but it seems difficult in the absence of evidence to find any other cause for the prosecution of Sister Renata who, despite her confession, for many years had led a life of religious regularity.

LANCELOT SHEPPARD

FURTHER READING: Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (Crown, 1959); Montague Summers, *The History of Witchcraft and Demonology* (Routledge & Kegan, 1973).





Walker Art Gallery

REVELATION

GOD'S WILL MADE PLAIN

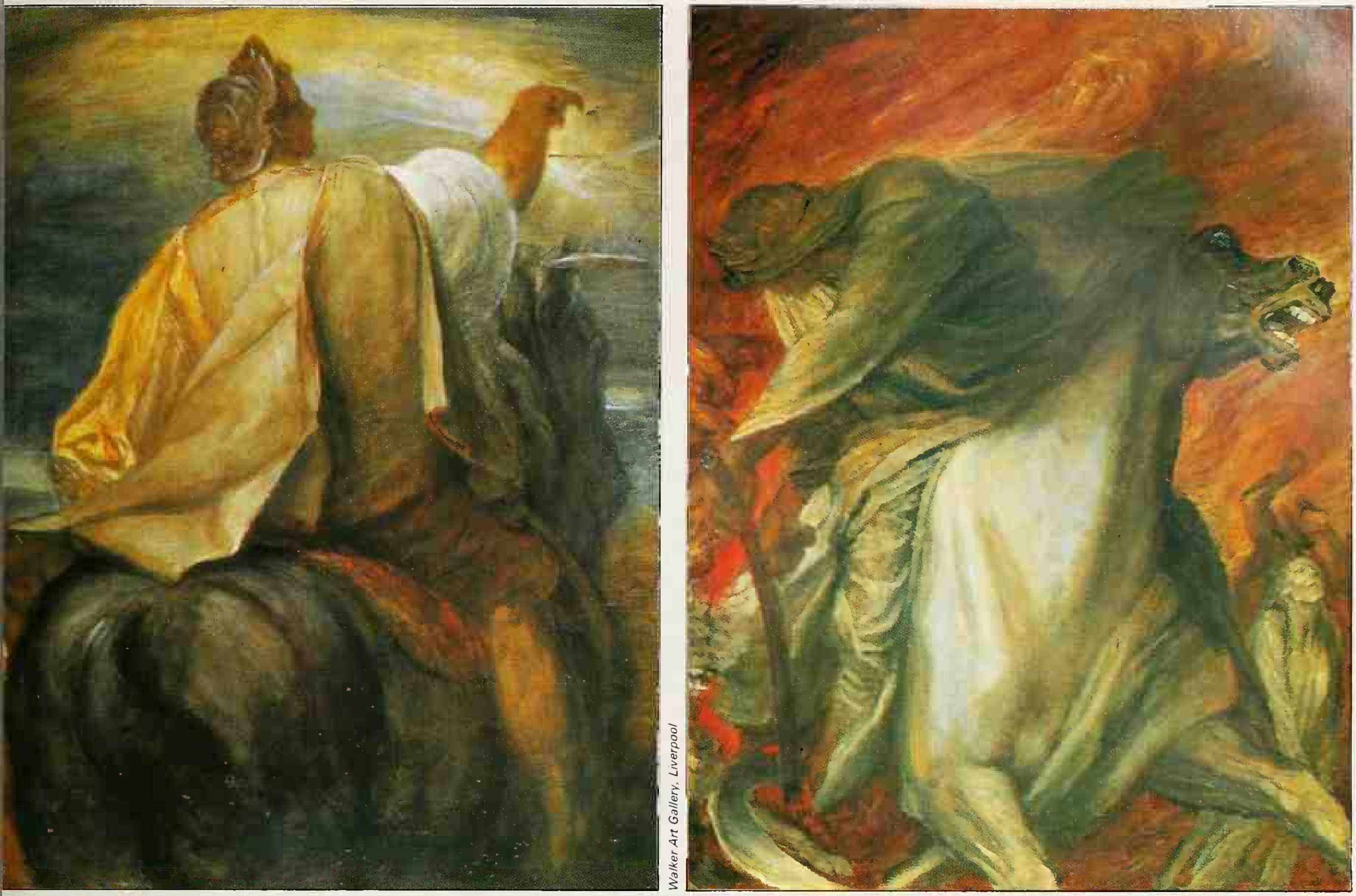
In most religions it is claimed that supernatural knowledge has been revealed to man through divine intervention. A remarkable Christian work in this tradition is the book of Revelation: teeming with vivid imagery, it was for many centuries the most popular book of the Bible

RELIGION, in all its forms, implies a relationship between human beings and superhuman powers which are believed to affect human affairs. The history of religions shows that man has rarely been content to acknowledge the existence of such powers as remote entities with which he can have no kind of personal contact. He has invariably personified them, ascribing to them purposes, and likes and dislikes in regard to himself. In turn, he has sought to know what were these purposes and sentiments, and has devised means of discovering them.

Most religions, both primitive and sophisticated, have traditional ways of learning the divine will, whether it be of a supreme god or of deities believed to control such important matters as the fertility of the land, the weather or disease. Shamans and witch-doctors claim to communicate with supernatural forces; oracles have been consulted, like the famous one of Apollo at Delphi; various forms of divination have been contrived, such as the inspection of the entrails of sacrificial victims or the flight of birds; and Chaldean astrologers sought to interpret the movement of the stars as the 'writing of the heavens'. In all such ways of acquiring supernatural knowledge the initiative has been taken by man. He has sought by special faculties such as clairvoyance, or by ecstatic trance or magical skills to elicit from gods or spirits information concerning human affairs and fortune. In many religions, however, it is claimed that supernatural knowledge has also come through divine initiative: in other words, that the deity has itself revealed its purpose or will, or truths about its nature and operations.

Heavenly Handwriting

Such revelation has taken many forms. It may be claimed that the revelation was given without human mediation. An example of this occurs in the Egyptian Book of the Dead (see BOOK OF THE DEAD) in the form



Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, **by G. F. Watts, now in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool: the first horseman rode a white horse and carried a bow, 'and he went out conquering and to conquer'; the second, on a red horse, carried a sword and brought war; the third rode a black horse and carried a balance; the fourth was Death, on a pale horse, 'and they were given power over a fourth of the earth'**

of a rubric attached to chapter 30, which concerns the witness of a man's heart at the judgement after death. It states that the text of this chapter was found at Hermopolis under a statue of the god Thoth, in the reign of Menkaure (c 2600 BC), and that it was inscribed on stone 'in the writing of the god himself'. A somewhat similar claim is made in chapter 22 of 2 Kings, which describes the discovery of 'the book of the law' during repair work in the temple of Yahweh at Jerusalem in the reign of King Josiah (7th century BC).

Claims to divine revelation have not generally assumed this automatic form, but have involved human agents. Thus the pharaoh Akhenaten, who tried to change the religion of Egypt (see IKHNATEN), claimed that his god, the Aten, had revealed his design to him. Gudea, the ruler of the Sumerian city state of Lagash c 2150 BC, records how in a dream three divine beings instructed him to build a temple, communicating to him what its ground plan should be. The book of Exodus (chapter 24) contains a graphic account of how Yahweh, the god of Israel, gave to Moses on Mount Sinai 'the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their (the Israelites') instruction'. The account goes on to describe how Yahweh also communicated on Mount Sinai long, detailed instructions for the making of the Ark and Tabernacle and their furnishings. A similar idea finds expression in the bas relief at the top of the stele on which the famous Code of King Hammurabi of Babylon is engraved: Hammurabi is depicted as receiving his commission to write the laws from the sun god Shamash, who was also the god of justice.

The theme of divine revelation permeates the whole of Hebrew religion. The idea is succinctly stated in the words of the prophet Amos: 'Surely the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets' (Amos 3.7). Unfortunately, both the origin and nature of prophecy in ancient Israel are very problematic. Some indication of this basic obscurity is given in the following statement in 1 Samuel 9.9: 'Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, "Come, let us go to the seer (*ro'eh*)"; for he who is now called a prophet (*nabhi*) was formerly called a seer.' But the issue is even more complicated than this later editorial comment suggests. Generally it would seem that the seers were clairvoyants, attached to the cult of Yahweh, who were consulted about such things as the whereabouts of lost animals, as for example Samuel was; but Yahweh might also reveal his intentions to them about more important matters, as in 1 Samuel, chapter 9. Prophets, as 1 Samuel, chapter 10, shows, were originally regarded as persons subject to ecstatic trance, on whom 'the spirit of God came mightily', and who 'prophesied' in that state (see also PROPHECY).

The great Hebrew prophets, however, were essentially men who felt themselves inspired by Yahweh to proclaim publicly what was his will concerning matters of current political and social concern. The accounts given of the revelations made to Isaiah and Amos provide significant information about the mode and content of such revelation. In the post-Exilic period (after 538 BC), prophetic revelation became progressively preoccupied with eschatological themes, such as the End of the World and the Last Judgement. The book of Daniel is an early example of this new kind of revelation, and the Christian writing known as the Revelation to John represents the continuation of the tradition into the 1st century AD. But these writings were carefully contrived compositions, purporting to foretell the coming of divine vengeance on the enemies of Israel or the persecutors of Christians.

God Revealed in History

Christian theologians have maintained that the whole history of Israel as recorded in the Bible, the career of Jesus, including his death and resurrection, and the founding of the Church, reveal the purpose of God manifested in history (see HISTORY). Consequently they call this revelation *Heilsgeschichte*, a German term meaning 'Salvation-History', for in it God's plan for the spiritual salvation of mankind is

Most religions authenticate their claims by appeal to divine truths alleged to have been revealed to their founders

supposedly unveiled. The idea finds early expression in the opening verses of the epistle to the Hebrews: 'In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.'

Both Judaism and Christianity claim to teach truths about God and human destiny which are known only by divine revelation. But similar claims have also been advanced by other religions, most notably by Islam. Indeed, the whole Moslem faith is founded upon what are believed to be the revelations made by Allah to Mohammed, and preserved in the Koran. The following passage, for example, clearly asserts the divine origin of Mohammed's message: 'This is truly the word of a venerable messenger, it derived from one who has great influence with the Lord of the Throne, to whom man gives ear and trusts. Your countryman (Mohammed) is not one who is possessed (by a spirit). He hath indeed seen him in the clear horizon' (Surah 81.19). The reference in the last sentence is to the angel Gabriel, from whom Mohammed claimed that he received the revelations of Allah.

Indian authorities designate certain Hindu scriptures, such as the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, as *sruti*, or divine truth which has been revealed to certain sages. The doctrines of Buddhism, likewise, are presented as revelations made by the Buddha. Similarly the *Gathas* purport to record the revelations made to Zoroaster by Ahura Mazdah.

The list of writings claiming to contain revelations of supernatural truths could be greatly extended. Most religions, in fact, authenticate their claims by appeal to divine truths alleged to have been revealed to their founders. To prove the validity of such claims no objective test can be applied; each religion claims that its authenticating revelation is unique. However, the comparative study of religion can generally relate each specific revelation to its cultural environment, and the psychology of religion has much to say about the nature of paranormal experience.

S. G. F. BRANDON

The Book of Revelation

The term 'Apocalypse' comes from the Greek *apokalypsis*, which means an unveiling or disclosure. It is particularly applied to the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation or Apocalypse of St John.

Apocalyptic writings are those which depict a conflict between the forces of good and evil, in which the good is threatened with extinction and is rescued from its opponents by supernatural intervention. The conflict is often expressed in symbolism, much of which seems unintelligible to modern readers. The intervention of God on behalf of the persecuted righteous minority is sudden and catastrophic, and inaugurates the victorious establishment of God's kingdom.

A large body of literature of this type was written in the period from 200 BC to 250 AD. Most of the later writings were the works of authors who used assumed names – the *Apocalypse of Peter*, for instance, was not written by St Peter. They are valuable evidence of the type of thinking that prevailed in the eras of oppression and persecution, when the Jews of Palestine were rebelling against their Syrian and Roman overlords, and when the Christian Church was beginning to feel the pressure of the hostile Roman Empire.

To the casual reader the Apocalypse may seem to be a disorganized mosaic of grotesque imagery that makes little sense, but in fact it has a logical and progressive structure. The key to the book lies in its theory of Christ and its opening sentence declares it to be 'the revelation of Jesus Christ'. It falls into six main sections:

1. Prologue	1.1–1.18
2. Christ and the Churches	1.19–3.22
3. Christ and the Universe	4.1–16.21
4. Christ in Conquest	17.1–21.8
5. Christ and the City of God	21.9–22.5
6. Epilogue	22.6–22.21

The prologue states the author, purpose and theme of the book, which centres on Christ as 'the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.' On the basis of this threefold character, Christ is presented as the key to the future.

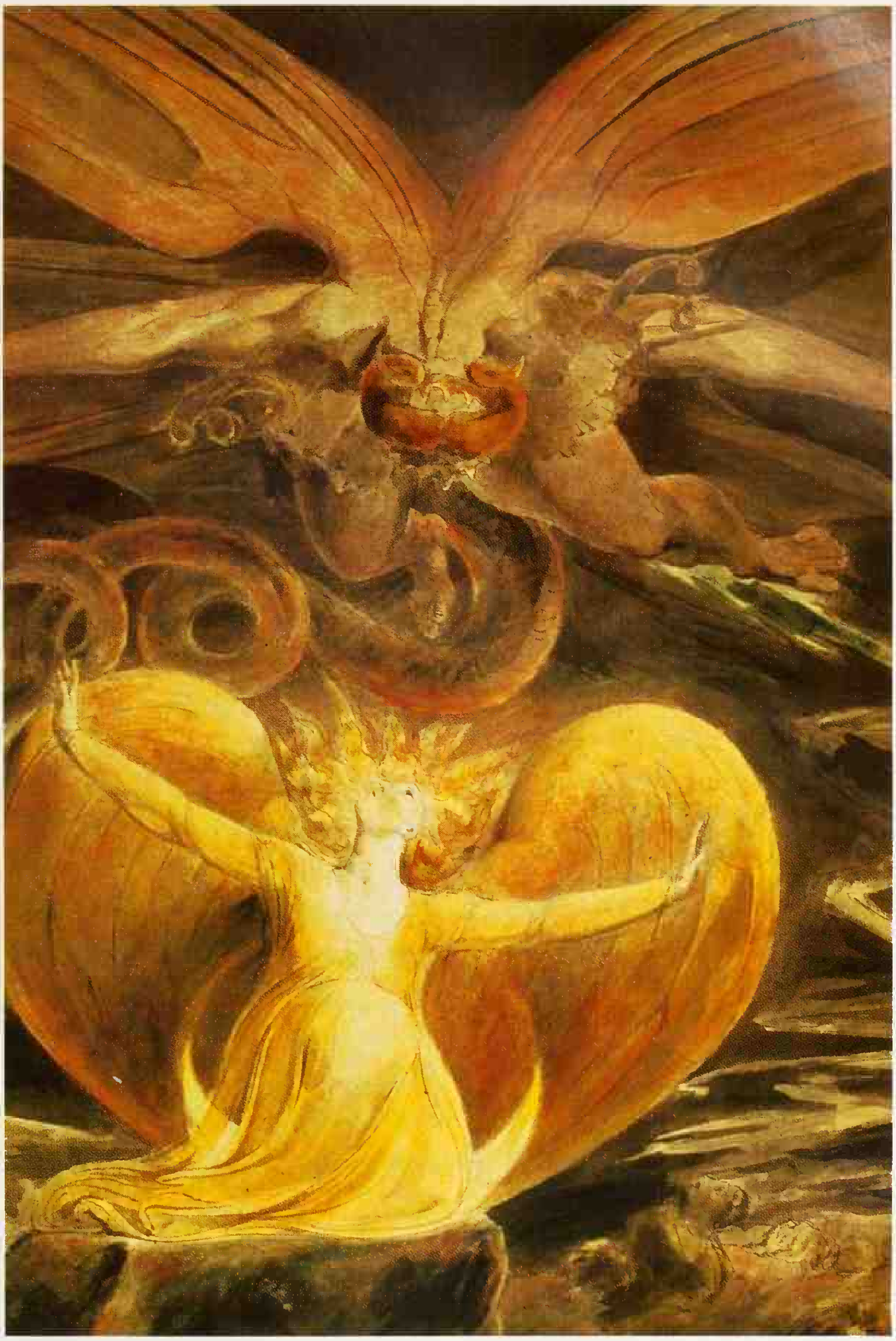
In the second section, the letters to the churches offer warning and encouragement to the seven leading Christian

The New Jerusalem

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away" . . . And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light shall the nations walk; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it, and its gates shall never be shut by day – and there shall be no night there; they shall bring into it the glory and the honour of the nations. But nothing unclean shall enter it, nor any one who practises abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him; they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Revelation, chapters 21 and 22



The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed with the Sun, **by William Blake: the Apocalypse was one of the most popular books of the Bible for hundreds of years and its magnificent and ferocious imagery took a firm hold on the imagination of generations of Christians. The woman clothed with the sun (chapter 12) has often been identified as the Church or as the Virgin Mary. She appears in heaven, with the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of 12 stars: she is with child and the Devil as a great red dragon waits to devour the child when it is born, but the child is saved by God**

National Gallery of Art, Washington

congregations of Asia, which are representative of the Church at large. Their characteristics are typical of the virtues and flaws of the Church of all time, and the messages given to them are universally applicable.

A Throne in Heaven

The third section, on Christ and the universe, is the longest and most complicated. It contains the largest amount of imagery and has been the battleground of interpreters ever since it was written.

This section begins with the vision of a throne in heaven. 'And he who sat there appeared like jasper and carnelian, and round the throne was a rainbow that looked like an emerald.' Round the throne were the thrones of 24 elders; from it issued flashes of lightning, voices and peals of thunder; before it burned 'seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God' and in front of it was 'as it were a sea of glass, like crystal'.

The author goes on to describe the scroll sealed with seven seals, the four horsemen – the last of whom is Death on a pale horse – the seven angels who blow trumpets, at which appalling catastrophes rain down upon the earth, the woman 'clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars' (often taken as a symbol of the Church), the great red dragon which is the Devil, the two beasts which are his servants, and the seven golden bowls 'full of the wrath of God'.

Though no two commentators agree about this section, it is generally taken to be concerned with the sovereignty of God over a chaotic world; the importance of Christ as Saviour and Judge; the conflict between the forces of evil and the people of God; and the apparent triumph of evil.

Babylon, Mother of Harlots

The fourth section, on Christ in conquest, describes the victory of the forces of good; the fall of 'Babylon the great, mother of harlots', who rides on a scarlet beast; the coming of Christ to annihilate the powers of evil – he is the rider on a white horse; 'his eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems'; the binding of the Devil in the bottomless pit for a thousand years; the judgement of the dead before the great white throne of God; and 'the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God', where there shall be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.

The fifth section, on Christ and the city of God, contains the description of the eternal state that awaits both the individual believer and the corporate body of the people of God. In it the purposes of God in both the Old Testament and the New are united; its gates and foundations memorialize both the tribes of Israel and the apostles of the Church. The paradise here described includes all that was lost when man left Eden: the presence of God, the river of life, the tree of life, the removal of the curse on Adam, and the joy of the eternal service of God.

Finally, the epilogue says that the book has shown 'what must soon take place' and gives a warning against tampering with the text.

What the Book Means

There have been almost as many different interpretations of the Apocalypse as interpreters. They can be classified generally into four broad divisions: preterist, historicist, futurist and idealist.

Preterist interpretations see the Apocalypse as solely a description of the author's own times. The churches, in section 2, are actual Christian congregations in seven cities of Asia. The conflict of good and evil is the real conflict which existed between a persecuting state and the suffering Church. Though the book's principles may be generally valid for all ages, it does not specifically refer to the future.

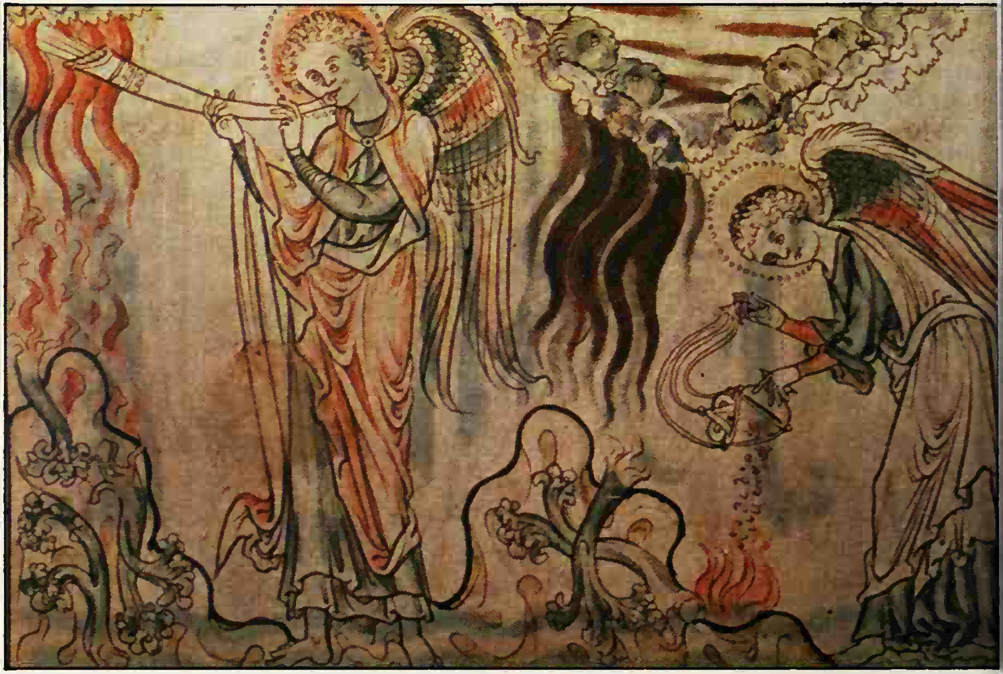
By contrast, the historicist school of thought maintains that sections 3 and 4 predict succeeding periods of history. Various identifications have been advanced to connect the seals, trumpets and bowls of wrath with the barbarian invasions which destroyed the Roman Empire, the rise of Islam, the Turkish conquests, the rise of the papacy, the Reformation, and other historical events. The conflicting explanations of the symbols involved and the strained interpretations used by many writers of this school cast doubt on the validity of any one of these historicist systems.

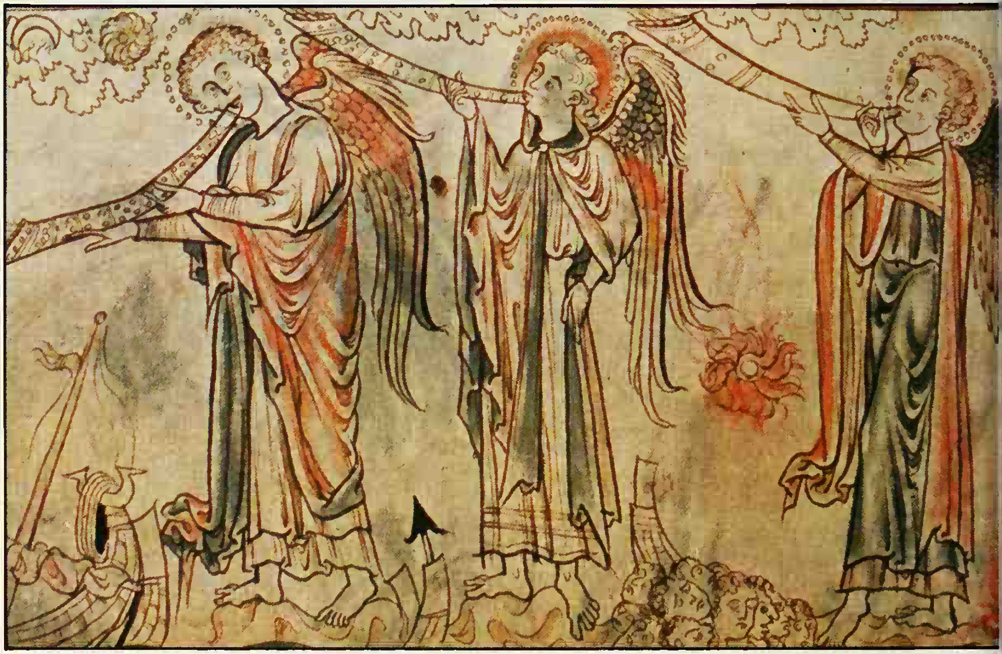
The futurist interpretation, which is the most literal one, says that section 2, the letters to the seven churches, is a generalized picture of the Church in the present age. Section 3 predicts a future period of trial and suffering, beginning with the removal of the Church and ending seven years later with the coming of Christ in judgement. When he comes, he will overthrow the evil government of the earth, judge the living and the dead, and finally introduce the eternal city of God.

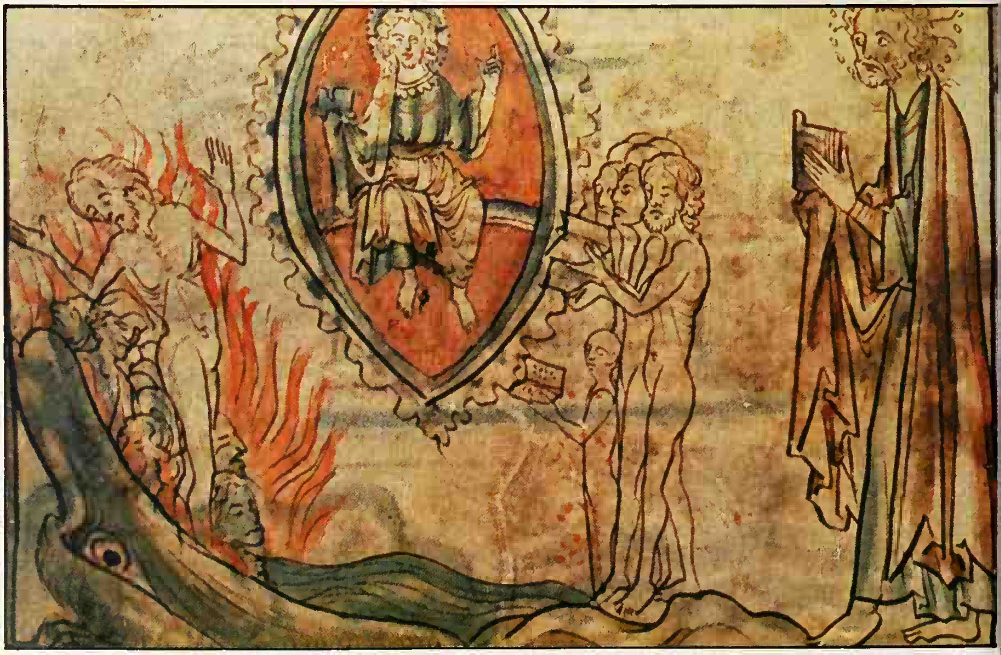
The idealist interpretation regards the entire book of Revelation as symbolic of the eternal conflict between good and evil, independent of any particular period in history or any series of historical events. This viewpoint says that the imagery of the Apocalypse teaches the ultimate victory of good over evil and the final bliss of God's people, but does not predict any particular process or events that can be identified in historic occurrences.

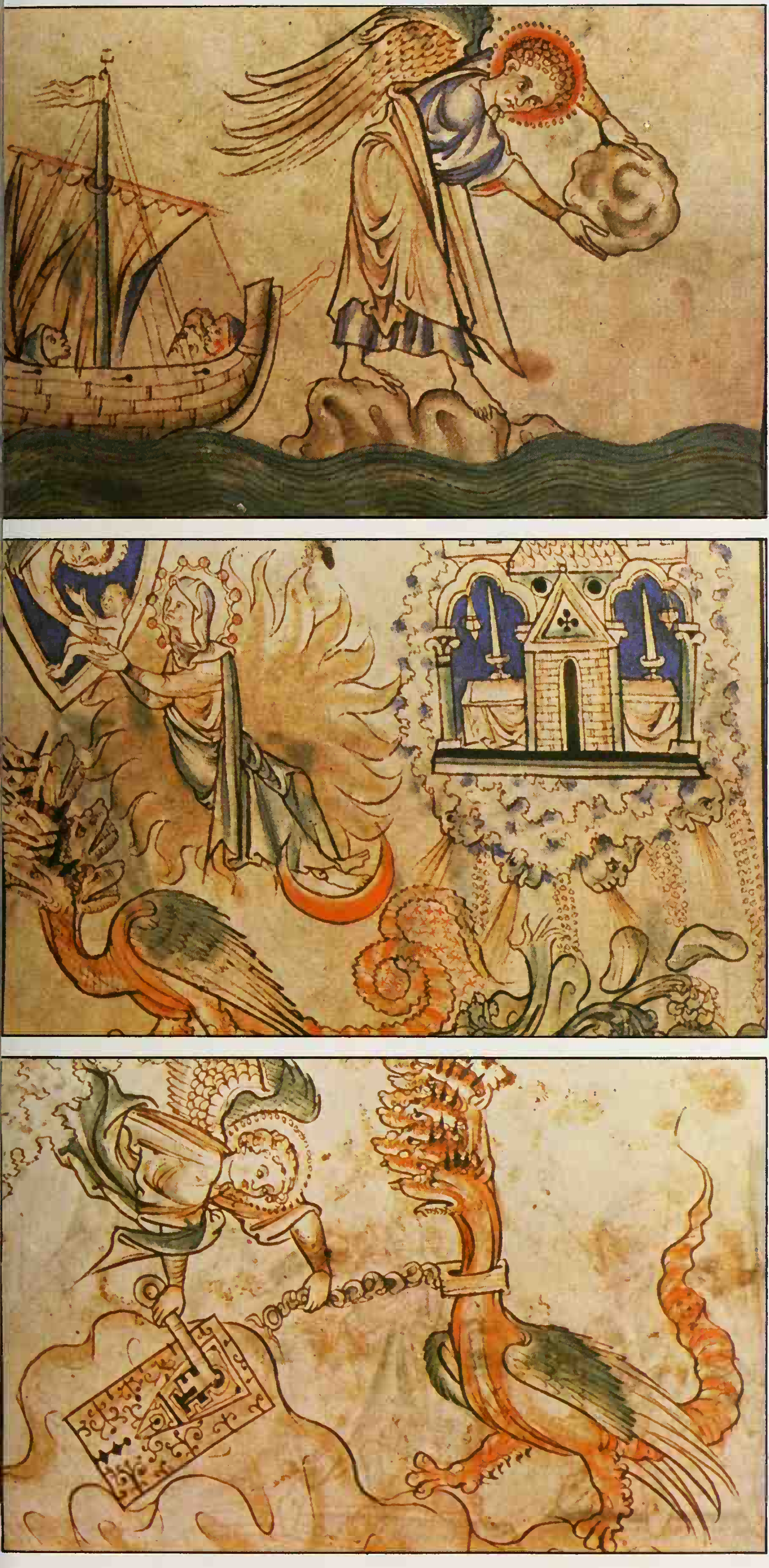
Readers of Revelation have always tended to apply its predictions to their own age and the immediate future. Probably, the first readers of the book and their successors in the first three centuries regarded it as a description of their own times and anticipated the end of the normal world in the near future. From the 4th century to the 16th the conflict of good and evil was generally interpreted as the struggle of the Church with paganism or with Islam, and the final end seemed remote. The Reformation shifted the interpretation to the conflict between the Protestants and the papacy; each side describing the other as Antichrist or the Scarlet Woman.

In the 19th and 20th centuries the futurist









Bodleian Library Filmstrip

Scenes from a 13th century MS, in the Bodleian Library, include angels blowing trumpets, which are the signal for plagues and devastations, an angel dropping a millstone into the sea, the escape of the woman clothed with the sun, and the angel with the key to the bottomless pit. Many have taken the Apocalypse as a prophecy of events which were in the future when it was written, and have connected the book's visions with historical events. Others believe that the book prophesies events yet to come, and others regard Revelation, not as a guide to the future, but as symbolic of the eternal conflict of good and evil

view gained ground among Protestants and became an integral part of powerful revivalist movements in Great Britain and America. Liberal theologians, however, have generally been more attracted by the idealist interpretation. But no one of the interpretations belongs solely to any one theological viewpoint; to some degree they are shared by all.

Who Wrote It?

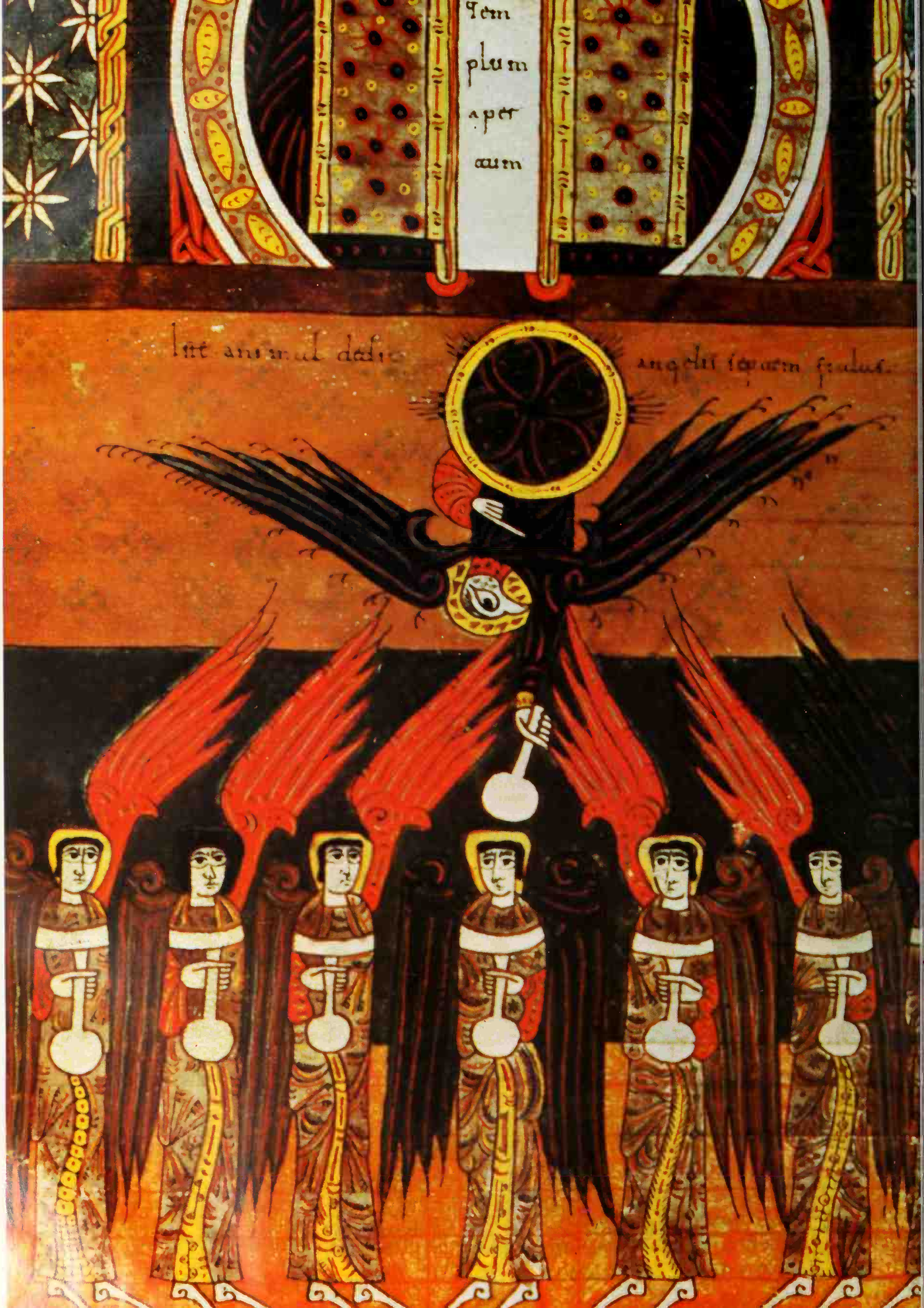
From an early date the book of Revelation was accepted as part of the authoritative collection of Christian writings called the New Testament, though some early Christian writers doubted its value and – until about the 6th century – the churches of the East were almost all opposed to its acceptance.

One factor in the doubts about the book was the question of who wrote it, a problem which is disputed to this day. At the beginning of the book, its author says that his name is John, a 'servant' of Jesus Christ and a 'brother' of the people whom he is addressing, a companion who shares with them 'the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance.' He was evidently exiled to the island of Patmos, in the Sporades off the coast of Asia Minor, because of his leadership in the Christian movement, probably during the time of the Roman Emperor Domitian (reigned 81–96 AD). He was a familiar figure among the churches of Asia and was regarded as a prophet (see chapter 22, verses 6, 9 and 19).

The general testimony of early Christian writers identifies him as the St John who wrote the fourth gospel – the son of Zebedee and one of Christ's disciples. This identification seems to have been generally accepted by Christians in the West.

Objections to this view emanated chiefly from Dionysius of Alexandria in the 3rd century AD. He argued that the Apocalypse claimed a definite author, whereas the fourth gospel and the letters of St John in the New Testament were anonymous; that its vocabulary was quite different from that of the other works by St John; and that it was full of grammatical errors whereas the other works were generally grammatically correct.

These objections are still maintained by some scholars but they are not insuperable. For instance, the dissimilarity of


tem
plum
aper
tum
hic animal dedit
angelis septem fialas

Through the Apocalypse were conveyed the hopes and protests of minorities who believed that God had a better destiny in store for them than the lives which they currently experienced

'And one of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God . . . Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God"': Spanish MS

vocabulary can be explained by the different content and purpose of the works – the Apocalypse consisting of visions which came to the writer in prison, and the gospel containing reminiscences of his experiences, written to instruct disciples.

There are resemblances which suggest a common origin for both the Apocalypse and the fourth gospel: in both Jesus is called 'the Word of God', a title not found elsewhere, and he is 'the Lamb' and 'the Shepherd' in both. In both Satan is mentioned frequently, and in both the significance of Christ's death is emphasized. There is no conclusive evidence for deciding that Revelation was written by the author of the fourth gospel but the weight of early evidence points to it.

Background of Disaster

Several possible dates have been suggested for the writing of the Apocalypse. One theory is that it dates from Nero's persecution of the Christians after Rome had been devastated by fire in 64 AD. The reaction against the state by referring to it as 'Babylon' and to its head as 'the beast' may reflect the resentment of Christians who had previously regarded it as neutral in religion.

The reference to 'kings' in chapter 17 states that five 'have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come.' If these are the Caesars, the five could be Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius, with Nero as the reigning emperor. But the counting could as easily begin with Augustus, the first ruler of the reconstituted Roman state, in which case the reigning emperor would be Vespasian and the one yet to come would be Titus (reigned 79–81 AD). Tension between the state and the Church existed all through the period from Nero to Trajan, who died in 117.

The most satisfactory date is probably the traditional one, which assigns Revelation to the reign of Domitian, between 81 and 96. It allows time for the development of the churches in Asia, and the insistence of Domitian that he be worshipped as 'Lord and God' (*Dominus et Deus*) agrees with the description of the beast which demanded universal worship in Revelation, chapter 13.

If the Apocalypse was written in the time of Domitian, its background becomes more understandable. The destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD, a disastrous fire that destroyed the centre of Rome soon afterwards, and an epidemic that ravaged the city, brought on a decade of calamity. Roman historians do not record a general persecution of Christians but one Christian historian does, and Domitian was widely hated for his egotism and tyranny.

The Apocalypse was written for Christians who feared imperial persecution. They needed both encouragement and admonition: encouragement to prevent collapse, and warning against laxity.

Though the style and content of Revelation may seem strange and fanciful, its substance is not thereby invalidated. Apocalyptic is as legitimate a means of expression as drama or poetry. Through it were conveyed the hopes and protests of minorities who believed that God had a better destiny in store for them than the lives which they currently experienced. They believed his promise and looked forward to the fulfilment of his purposes.

Though encased in apocalyptic form and language, Revelation presents a picture of the divine plan for the future. Certainly, the events of the 20th century make its symbolism seem less far-fetched than it did a century ago.

(See also END OF THE WORLD; GREAT BEAST.)

M. C. TENNEY

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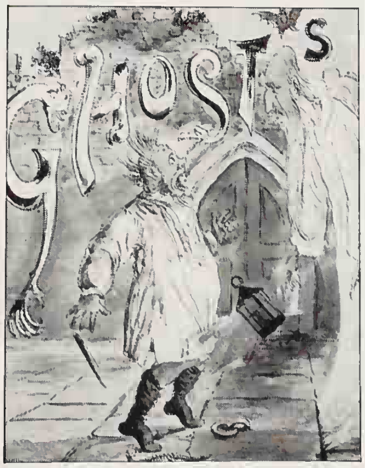
Revenant

One who returns from the dead, a ghost, from the French *revenir*, 'to return'; ghosts of the departed appear to the living for a variety of reasons: sometimes because they are the victims of murder and seek to wreak vengeance on those who have harmed them during life: often because they have died a premature or violent death; although there are kindly ghosts, others, like vampires, return solely for evil purposes. See GHOSTS; HAUNTED HOUSES; VAMPIRES.



British Museum

Rice

The staple diet of many oriental communities, its cultivation, from sowing to threshing, is often accompanied by elaborate ceremony; in Japan plays are performed and prayers are said, to propitiate the spirits and ensure a good harvest; and among certain tribes in South-east Asia rice is said to have a soul to which sacrifices must be offered; in the West an ancient symbol of fertility, it is still thrown over newly married couples to bring them good luck and prosperity.

Axel Poignant

The telling of riddles was once far more than an amusement for children: a condemned man might sometimes riddle his way out of the noose, while certain African tribes used them in connection with rain-making and in the Celebes it was customary to tell them only in the presence of a corpse

RIDDLES

'THE ONLY LITERARY PURSUIT which engaged Harriet at present . . . was the collecting and transcribing all the riddles of every sort that she could meet with, into a thin quarto of hot pressed paper, made up by her friend and ornamented with cyphers and trophies.

'In this age of literature, such collections on a very grand scale are not uncommon. Miss Nash, head teacher at Mrs Goddard's, had written out at least three hundred; and Harriet, who had taken the first hint of it from her, hoped, with Miss Woodhouse's help, to get a great many more . . .'

In this passage from *Emma* (1816) Jane Austen describes a pleasant contemporary pastime. We know that our ancestors enjoyed amusing themselves with riddles, and in fact such collections figure among the earliest printed books. Robert Chambers, in *The Book of Days* (1860), offers the following carefully edited selection to his readers, 'the greater part of them being too strongly impregnated with indecency and profanity to be presentable here'.

> What is it that never was and never will be?
> A mouse's nest in a cat's ear.
>
> Why do men make an oven in a town?
> Because they cannot make a town in an oven.
>
> What is the worst bestowed charity that one can give?
> Alms to a blind man; for he would be glad to see the person hanged that gave it to him.

Chambers's source, *Demaundes Joyous*, was 'Enprynted at London in Fletestrete at the sygne of the sonne' by Wynkyn de Worde in 1511.

Sweeter than Honey

Riddles have been asked since ancient times. They appear in early oriental manuscripts, in ballads and other European folk literature, in the sagas of Iceland, in the story of Oedipus, and in such famous epics as the *Kalevala*. The second book of Chronicles records that 'when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon she came to Jerusalem to test him with hard questions'.

The book of Judges (chapter 14) preserves a complete account of one of the oldest riddles which we possess: 'And Samson said to them, "Let me now put a riddle to you; if you can tell me what it is, within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty festal garments . . ." And they said to him, "Put your riddle, that we may hear it." And he said to them, "Out of the eater came something to eat. Out of the strong came something sweet." . . . On the fourth day they said to Samson's wife "Entice your husband to tell us what the riddle is . . ." And Samson's wife wept before him . . . and on the seventh day he told her, because she pressed him hard. Then she told the riddle to her countrymen. And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down. "What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?" And he said to them. "If you had not ploughed with my heifer. you would not have found out my riddle."'

Today riddles are regarded as little more than an amusement for children, with minor educational value: a form of entertainment which develops a certain facile mental agility and strengthens the powers of observation. The idea that they merit serious study was pioneered in the English-speaking world by Professor Archer Taylor, who published his *English Riddles from Oral Tradition* in 1951. Classification of the most important riddle types owes much to Taylor's work.

Essentially a Metaphor

The main category is the 'true riddle'. This provides a deliberately obscure description of something, so that it even appears to be self-contradictory or absurd:

> Little Nancy Eddicote
> In a white petticoat
> And a red nose.
> The longer she stands
> The shorter she grows.

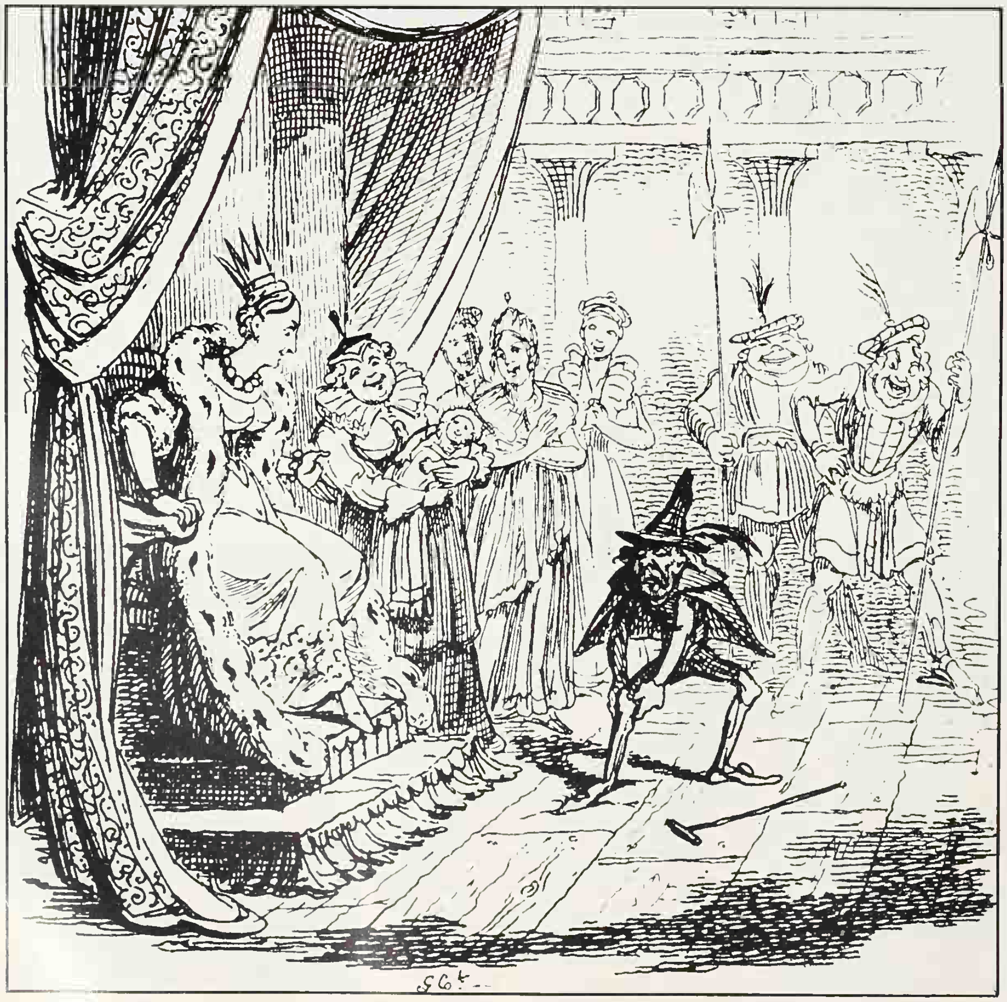
The answer is a candle.

> King am I none,
> Yet a crown I wear.
> Watch have I none,
> Yet the time I declare.

Here the answer is a cock. Both these illustrate Aristotle's definition of a riddle as essentially a metaphor. In the first of these riddles a comparison is implied between a little girl, as set out in the description, and a candle, which provides the answer.

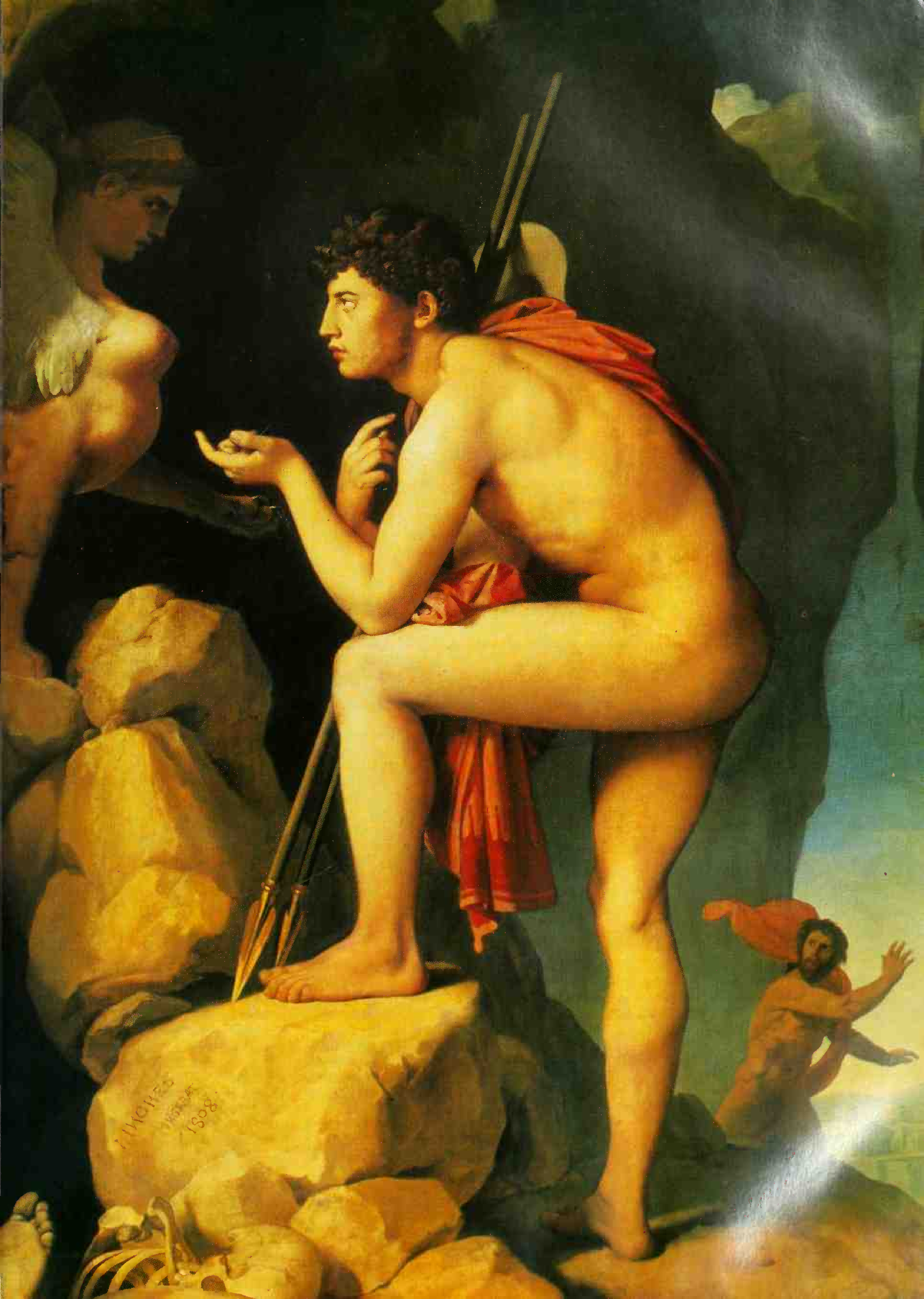
Both examples are drawn from the world of everyday. In general true riddles relate to nature – to fruit and vegetables, the planets and the elements, to household objects and implements, and provide a wealth of information about material culture.

Other important categories are conundrums, based on punning or play on words:



Right **The most famous of all riddles was the one asked by the Sphinx: 'What has four feet in the morning, two at midday and three in the evening?' If you could not solve this riddle, the Sphinx strangled you on the spot. The answer was given by Oedipus and is 'man', because a baby goes on all fours, a man in the prime of life stands on two legs and an old man in the evening of his days leans on a stick. When the riddle was answered, the Sphinx jumped from the mountainside and killed herself: *Oedipus and the Sphinx*, by Ingres *Left* Rumpelstiltskin's fury when the riddle of his name is solved: illustration by Cruickshank**

Giraudon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> Why is a widow compared to a turnip?
> Because the better half is under the ground.

biblical riddles:

> After Adam had eaten the forbidden fruit,
> did he stand or sit down?
> Neither – he fell.

witty questions:

> Where was Moses when the light went out?
> In the dark.

arithmetical riddles:

> As I was going to St Ives, I met a man with seven wives. Every wife had seven sacks, and every sack held seven cats, and every cat had seven kittens: kittens, cats, sacks and wives, how many were going to St Ives? Answer, one.

and alphabet riddles:

> The beginning of eternity, the end of time
> and space.
> The beginning of end, and end of every place.

The answer here is the letter E.

A particularly interesting type of riddle, called by Professor Taylor a 'neck riddle', is said to have been asked by a prisoner condemned to death. If the captors failed to answer, their prisoner was released. A Lincolnshire riddle of this type runs:

> I sit on my love,
> I stand on my love,
> And my love casts me a light.

The answer is: 'A man murdered his wife or mistress, and then formed her bones into a chair, while he buried her flesh under the hearthstone, and made candles of her fat.'

A neck riddle collected in Herefordshire at the beginning of this century goes as follows: 'There was a man convicted of having stolen a sheep; he was sentenced to death, but the magistrates said he could go free if he could ask a riddle they could not answer, and he was liberated for three days so that he might invent one. As he went out of prison, he saw a horse's skull by the roadside. Returning to prison on the third day in despair, he noticed that in it was a bird's nest with six young ones, and he thought of the following riddle:

> As I walked out,
> As I walked out,
> From the dead I saw the living spring.
> Blessed may Christ Jesus be
> For the six have set the seventh free.

The form of this riddle, the contrast of new matter emerging from a rotten carcass, is reminiscent of the ancient puzzle asked by Samson. The neck-saving riddle, *Halslösungsrätsel* in German, is based on a highly unusual or unique situation which only the riddler himself can possibly know, and Professor Taylor points out that its use as a means of escaping execution only appears in Germanic tradition.

Certain of Sir James Frazer's observations led him to conclude that the purpose of riddles might once have been to assist growth of the crops; that they functioned as life charms, possibly comparable with the Halslösungsrätsel. Certain African tribes, for example, used them in connection with rain-making, while others told them only at certain seasons. This is also the case in the Celebes where, among the Bolang Mongondo, it is customary only to tell riddles in the presence of a corpse. A death and rebirth ritual may be indicated here.

Sometimes riddles served as trials of wisdom, the loser forfeiting life or honour. In the *Edda* a giant challenges the god Odin:

> Thou shalt ne'er come forth again from our
> courts
> If thou be not the wiser of twain

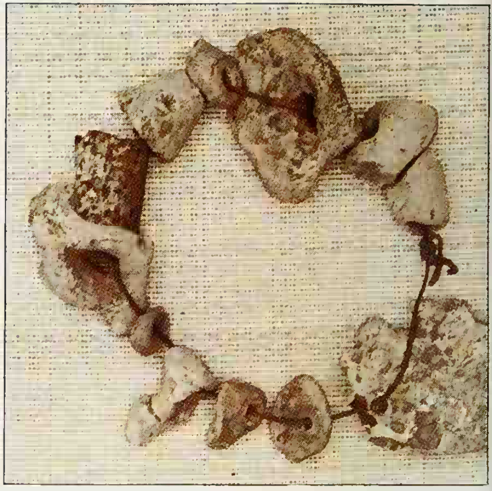
and Odin replies:

> Riddle-reader I am called.

A comparable link between riddles and merit appears in the 'hard questions' sometimes associated with matrimonial tradition. Girls of Turkish tribes in Central Asia, for example, questioned their suitors, who were punished if they could not find an answer.

VENETIA NEWALL

FURTHER READING: Archer Taylor, *English Riddles from Oral Tradition* (Octagon Books, 1977); Archer Taylor and Vernam Hull, *A Collection of Irish Riddles* (Univ. of California Press, 1955); Alexander Nicolson, *Gaelic Riddles and Enigmas* (Folcroft, 1976).



Having neither beginning nor end, a ring stood for eternity and perfection and so was an ideal pledge of faith between two people

RING

QUEEN ELIZABETH, so it is said, presented the Earl of Essex with a precious ring. Should he ever give offence, he need only return it and all would be forgiven. When he eventually fell from favour and was under sentence of death, the Earl sent back the ring from prison. Unfortunately, it was intercepted by an ill-wisher and never reached the Queen, so the execution took place after she had waited vainly for it to arrive.

A ring was a sign of the wearer's authority. Used to seal letters and other important documents, it was also a token in itself: 'And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Behold, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand . . . Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt' (Genesis, chapter 41). A monarch would entrust one to his messenger. In Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* the king says:

> If entreaties
> Will render you no remedy, this ring
> Deliver them, and your appeal to us
> There make before them.

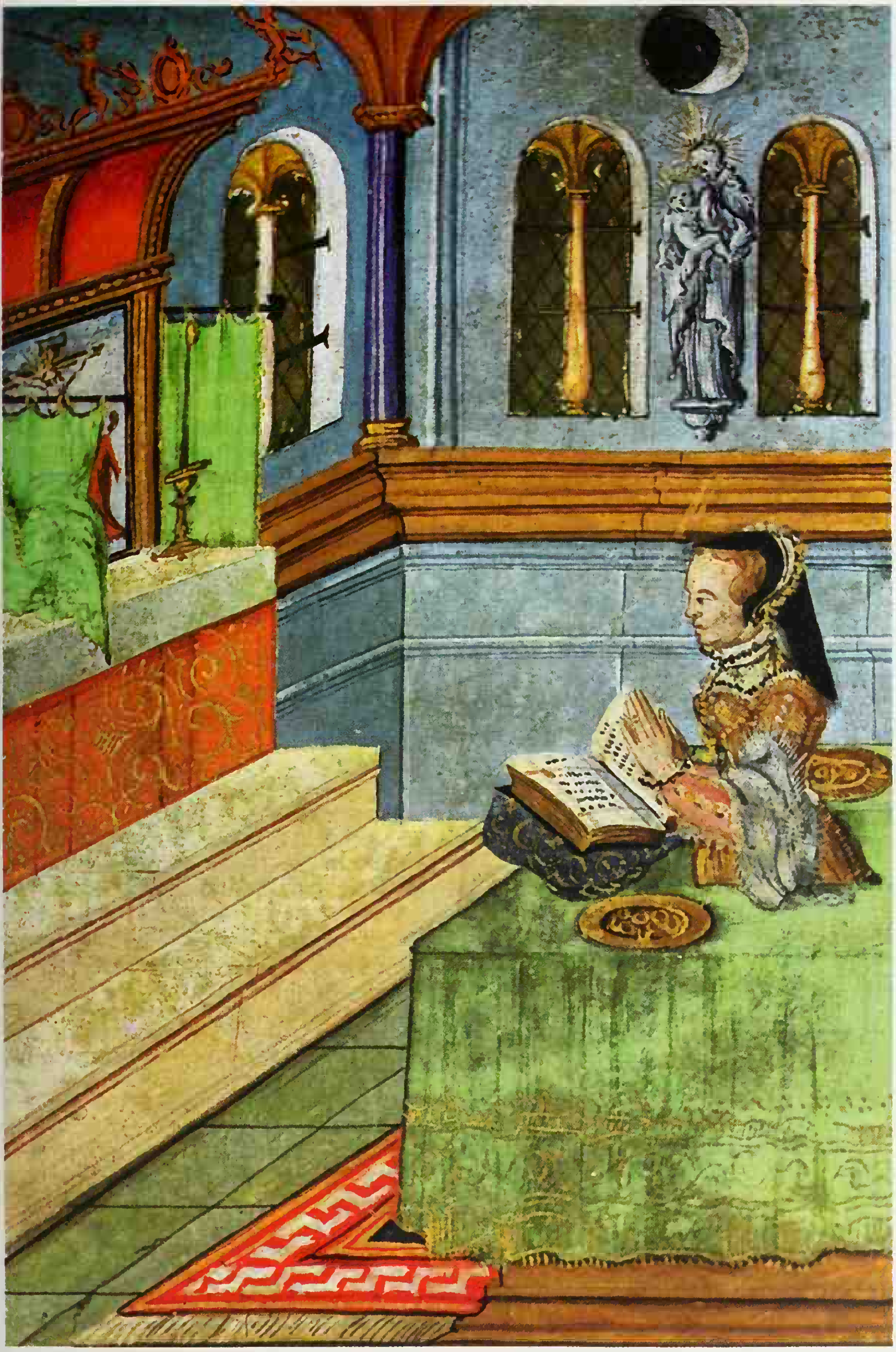
The authority which a monarch imparted to his ring was traditionally able to heal certain ailments: for at one time rulers were widely thought to possess miraculous powers. Touching for the King's Evil (scrofula) was practised until the time of Queen Anne (see KING'S EVIL) and the practice of bestowing cramp rings was not dissimilar. It was supposed to originate from a particular ring, long preserved and venerated in Westminster Abbey. According to legend Edward the Confessor had given it to a beggar who asked for alms in the name of St John the Evangelist; the beggar had then disappeared. Two English pilgrims in the Holy Land were later given the same ring by an old man, who said he was St John and told them to return it to the king. This ring was believed to cure cramp and falling sickness (epilepsy).

Cures from Coffin Nails

Cramp rings were offered by the monarch to the cross on Good Friday and blessed by him. An entry in the household accounts of Edward IV reads: 'Item. To the King's offerings to the cross on Good Friday, out from the counting house for medicinable rings of gold and silver, delivered to the jewel house, 25s.' Andrew Boorde, a contemporary of Henry VIII, says: 'Kings of England doth hallow every year cramp rings, which rings worn on one's finger doth help them which have the cramp.' The ceremony fell into disrepute with the Reformation, when offerings to the cross were discontinued; Queen Mary apparently performed it, but its later revival is questionable.

Cramp rings, with variations, have continued into modern times. Generally they were prepared from the metal attachments to a coffin – the handles, hinges, screws or nails. A popular cure for rheumatism, paralysis and other cramp-like disorders was for the sufferer to stand silently at the church entrance and collect a number of pennies from the parish bachelors. This being done, three circuits of the communion table had to be made. If the clergyman was obliging, he would then exchange the coins for a piece of silver from the offertory, from which a ring was made. Sometimes crooked sixpences were donated for the same purpose.

In his *Finger-Ring Lore* (1877), William Jones says: 'The use of galvanic rings for the cure of rheumatism belongs to our



Westminster Cathedral Library/David Robinson

***Above* 'Kings of England doth hallow every year cramp rings': Mary Tudor blessing the rings, in a custom which traditionally stemmed from a healing ring owned by Edward the Confessor and long preserved at Westminster Abbey *Left* Cramp stones discovered at a house in Essex**

own time, and is by no means extinct.' Nearly a hundred years later, his remark is not out of date. Expensive rheumatism rings are sold in London shops, apparently to a wide range of purchasers; even horses are claimed to respond to them.

Rings were used in still other ways to promote health. During an epidemic in the 16th century, Lord Chancellor Hatton wrote: 'I am likewise bold to commend my humble duty to our dear mistress (Queen Elizabeth) by this letter and ring, which hath the virtue to expel infectious airs, and is (as it letteth me) to be worn between the sweet dugs.' The hoof of an ass's right foot, mounted in a ring, was said to be a cure for epilepsy; and a gold ring, especially if inscribed, would heal St Anthony's fire (erysipelas). A gold ring rubbed against a stye was also supposed to be effective.

Sometimes, because of its intimate connection with its owner, a ring was thought to indicate the circumstances of its former wearer. A so-called life token was a means of keeping in touch when people were parted, and as long as the token remained in good condition all was well; if it deteriorated, the omen was bad.

In the Middle Ages it was commonly supposed that rings possessed a variety of supernatural powers. Joan of Arc was said by her accusers to own magic rings which gave her victory on the battlefield. According to legend, the Emperor Charlemagne fell violently in love, and when his mistress died was quite unable to tear himself from her body. The Archbishop of Cologne intervened and succeeded in removing from her mouth a ring set with a beautiful stone. The king's grief immediately diminished for, so the story goes, the ring was a talisman which had cast a spell upon him. To prevent a recurrence, the Archbishop threw it into a lake near Aachen. Nevertheless the Emperor was so fascinated by the place that he often walked by the water, and eventually built a palace there, which became his capital.

Seven centuries later, Cardinal Wolsey was rumoured to possess a magic ring through which he had achieved power. 'He bewitched the king's mind, and made the king dote upon him more than ever he did on any lady,' wrote William Tyndale in *The Practice of Prelates*. And according to Sir William Neville, 'My Lord Cardinal had such a ring that whatsoever he asked of the King's Grace, that he had.'

Inscriptions were thought to increase the magic properties of a ring. Charm rings, bearing a word of power and made of suitable materials, were used against the Evil Eye. The plague was warded off with rings on which the names of the Holy Family were engraved, and rings bearing the names of the Magi – Melchior, Kaspar and Balthasar – were similarly used against cramp.

The Ideal Talisman

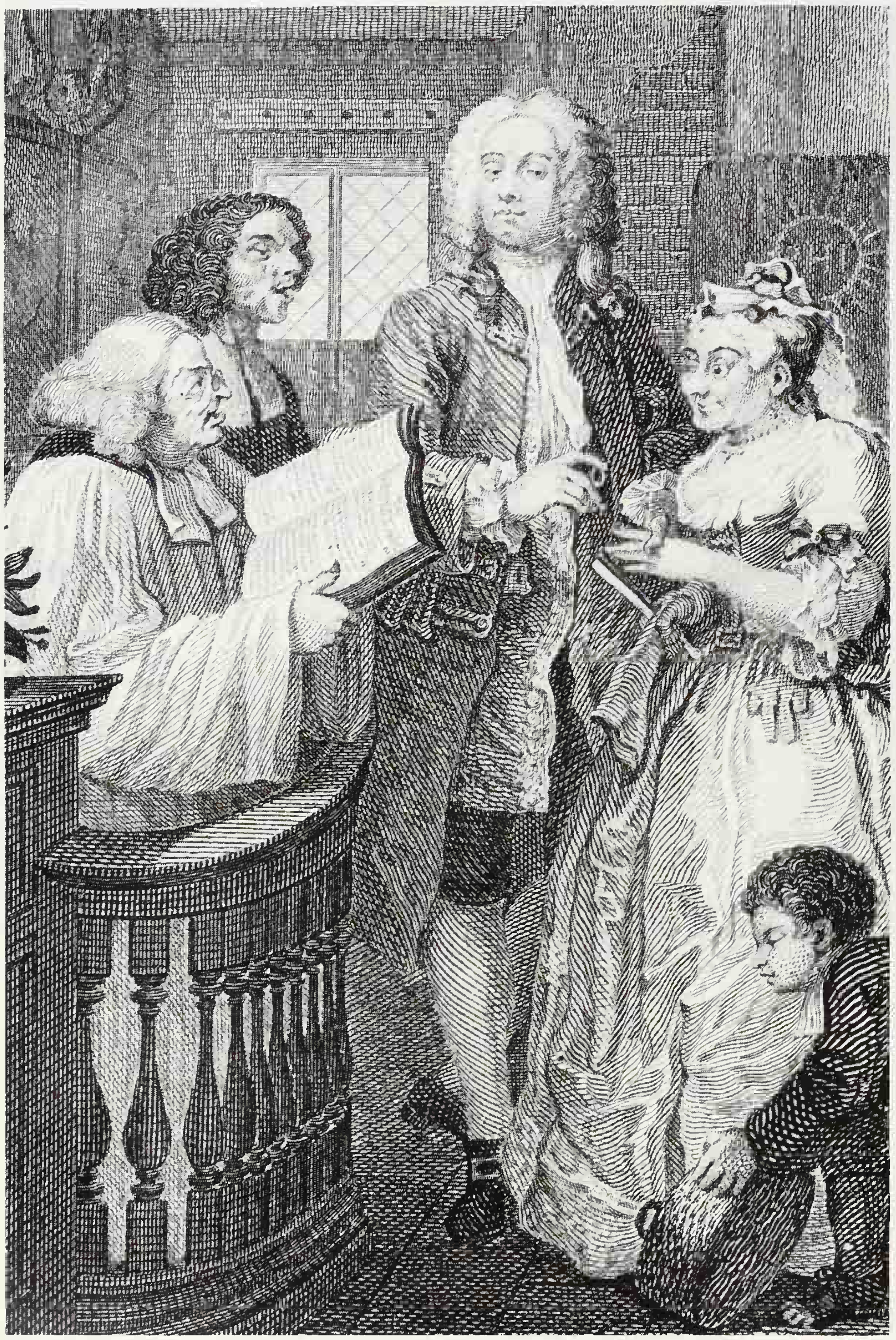
A continuous circle, with neither beginning nor end, a ring was the ideal talisman, standing for eternity, perfection and completeness (see CIRCLE). Wagner used the symbol in his famous opera cycle; in the early northern myths on which he draws, the sacred ring of Thor was a symbol of law and order. It was kept in his temples and oaths were sworn upon it.

Anglo-Saxon swords have been found with a ring attached to the hilt. It was upon the hilt of the sword that men swore allegiance to their ruler, and in this context the ring represented a pledge between two people. The same significance appears in the wedding ring. In medieval Germany a couple swore a mutual oath of faithfulness upon the hilt of a sword, and there was another contemporary custom of proferring the bride her wedding ring on a sword hilt.

Freudian psychoanalysis, which views human life in sexual terms, sees the finger as a male symbol joined to the female, the ring, in marriage, but a poem by Robert Herrick (1591–1674) expresses the more traditionally accepted view:

> And as this round is nowhere found
> To flaw or else to sever
> So let our love as endless prove,
> And pure as gold for ever.

An ancient version of the wedding service runs: 'Wyth thys rynge y the wedde . . . with



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Giving the wedding ring, from Hogarth's ***Rake's Progress***: the ring's importance in marriage ceremonies is probably based on its circular shape, a symbol of perfection and eternity

my bodi y the worshippe, and with all my worldith catel y the honoure.'

Jewish brides generally wore a plain band, but a very elaborate ring, the property of the local congregation, was loaned for the synagogue ceremony, and some Jewish scholars maintain that it was also worn during the following week. These rings, which were already known in the Middle Ages, were generally made of gold and thickly ornamented with filigree and enamel. They were sometimes surmounted by a miniature replica of the synagogue building, the roof hinged so that some suitable item, for instance a sprig of myrtle, might be inserted.

Such rings were often inscribed *Mazel Tov*, meaning good luck. Christian betrothal and wedding rings were also at one time engraved with mottos called 'posies'. Jaques says to Orlando in *As You Like It:* 'You are full of pretty answers. Have you not been acquainted with goldsmiths' wives, and conned them out of rings?' The writing of these posies became in effect a literary exercise. Often rhymed, they were expressions of love:

> Remember him who died for thee
> And after him remember me.

Posy rings, a fashion which lasted into the 18th century, were a pleasure for the well-to-do. Poor people, unable to afford such luxuries, often hired a plain gold ring at the church. There are even a number of cases when the ring of the church key was used. One parish clerk, called upon to lend his key, preferred to borrow a curtain ring from a neighbouring house. In a letter dated 1752, Horace Walpole described a clergyman's refusal to marry the Duke of Hamilton without any kind of ring: 'The Duke swore he would send for the Archbishop; at last they were married with a ring of the bed-curtain, at half-an-hour past twelve at night, at May Fair chapel.'

Sometimes rings were presented to the wedding guests. When a maid in the household of a certain Edward Kelly married, her master gave away gold wire rings valued at £4000. This was in the time of Elizabeth I. A few weeks before the Virgin Queen died, the coronation ring, which had become ingrown, was filed away from her finger. It was an old idea that a wedding ring should not be removed, a custom which the Queen had observed for, as she put it, she was wedded to her kingdom. It was widely felt that this forcible removal of the coronation ring was ill omened, for a ring was supposed to remain intact upon the owner's finger. If it broke, this foretold disaster. In 1857 the widow of a murdered farmer said: 'Ah! I thought I should soon lose him, for I broke my ring the other day; and my sister too lost her husband after breaking her ring. It is a sure sign.'

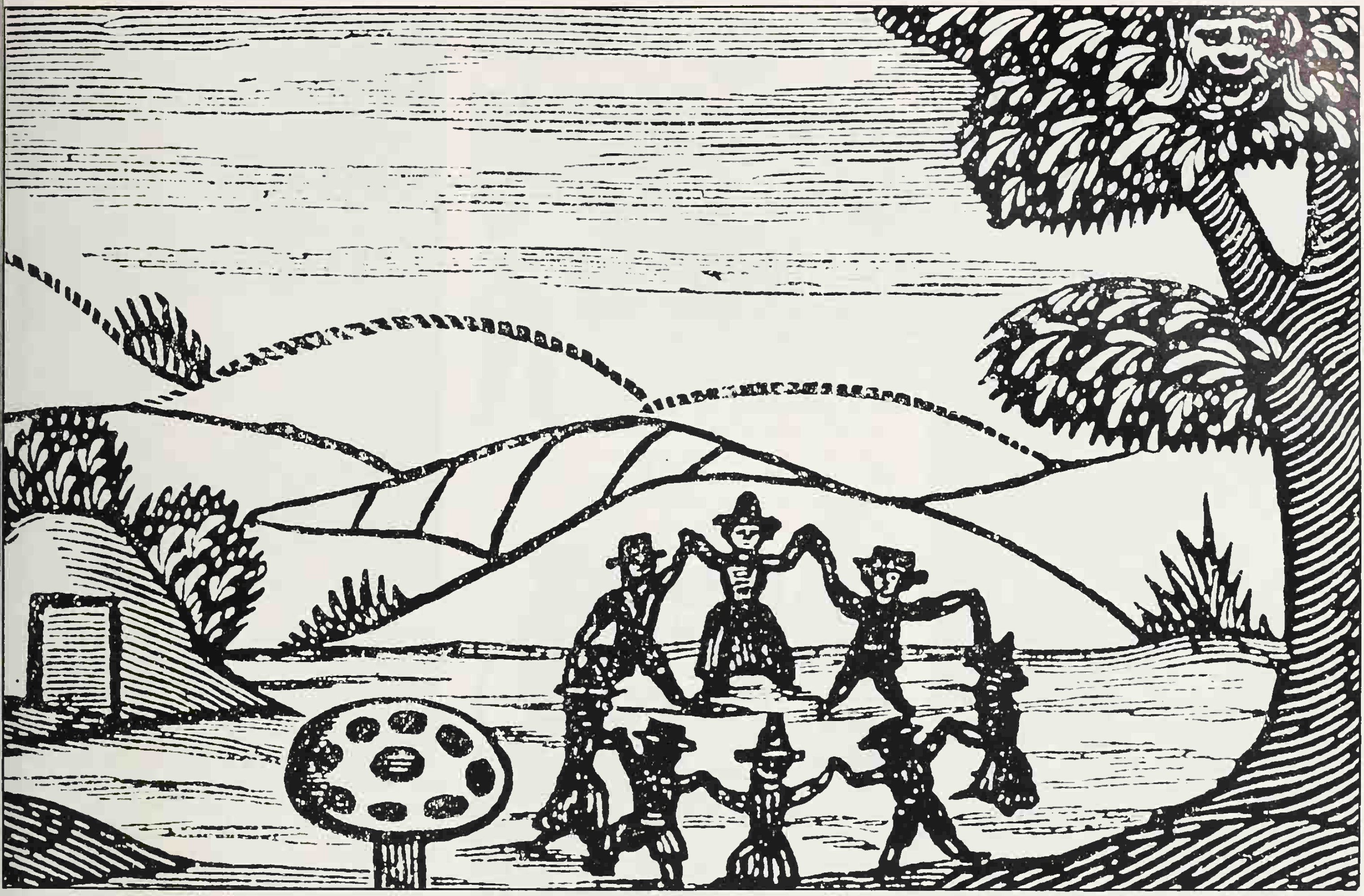
The old-fashioned gimmal, however, was specially made in such a way that it could be broken. It was a ring made of two hoops, divided between the couple at betrothal and united again at the wedding to form a single circle. Naturally a prearranged breakage of this kind was not ill-omened. Equally, since it so often figures in various rituals, the wedding ring cannot invariably have remained in position. Sometimes it was used for protective purposes. The Hutzuls, Ukrainian mountaineers, conducted milking through one to prevent witches stealing the milk.

The Heathen Wedding Ring

The divination of marriages was a more obvious use for the wedding ring. Sometimes this involved discovering it in a portion of food. The Irish say that whoever finds one in a piece of Michaelmas pie will soon get married. In Aberdeenshire at harvest there used to be a feast called *Clyack* – 'meal and ale'. A number of dishes were filled with ale, and treacle was added for sweetening. Next oatmeal was stirred in and a quantity of whisky added. A ring was put in every dish, each of which was shared by six or seven people. There was strong and often violent competition to find the ring, for this meant marriage within the year.

A widespread practice was to cut tiny fingers of bridal cake and pass them nine times through the wedding ring. The cake, itself an emblem of fertility because of the rich ingredients, was given to the bridesmaids to put under their pillows and dream of their husbands-to-be.

A northern English variant of this custom



Fairies dancing in a ring, a 17th century woodcut: dark green circles in the grass of fields are in folklore the sites of fairy dances

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required three girls to bake a dumb-cake, that is, in complete silence, on 6 October – St Faith's Day. They made it with flour, spring water, sugar and salt, and each had to turn it three times. When the cake was ready, it was divided into three helpings and each girl cut her portion into nine pieces. These were drawn three times through the wedding ring of a woman married for seven years, and as the girls undressed for bed they ate their cake, saying:

O good St Faith be kind tonight
And bring to me my heart's delight;
Let me my future husband view
And be my vision chaste and true.

The three of them then got into one bed, with the ring suspended above it as a charm to bring the desired dream. With such practices current, it is hardly surprising that the Puritans disapproved of the 'heathenish' wedding ring and abolished it while Cromwell was in power.

The marvellous properties attributed to the wedding ring were reinforced by the custom of wearing it on the third finger of a woman's hand. Tradition held that this finger possessed healing powers. In folk belief, some or all of the other fingers were poisonous; but if a sore was stroked with the third finger, it would heal. The ancients supposed that a vein connected this finger directly with the heart, a notion which was refuted in Sir Thomas Browne's *Vulgar Errors* (1646): 'An opinion there is, which magnifies the fourth (that is, third) Finger of the left Hand; presuming therein a cordial relation, that a particular vessel, nerve, vein or artery is conferred thereto from the heart, and therefore that especially hath the honour to bear our rings.'

VENETIA NEWALL

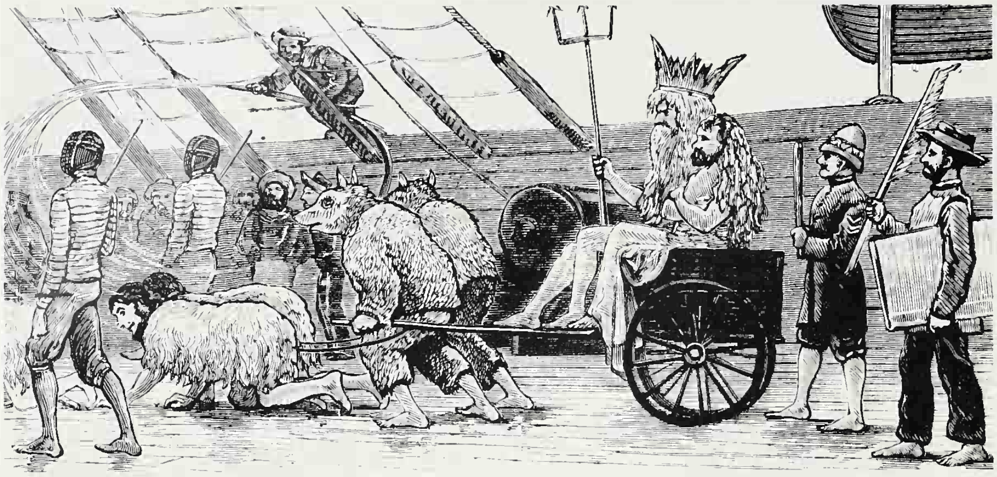
FURTHER READING: William Jones, *Finger-Ring Lore* (Gale, 1968); Joan Evans, *English Posies and Posy Rings* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1931).

The transition from one state of life to another, whether at birth, marriage, death or other critical period, is attended in many societies by rituals. Such rituals have been shown to follow a consistent pattern, meant to ensure the effective completion of the changeover

RITES OF PASSAGE

A FLEMISH ANTHROPOLOGIST working at the Sorbonne, A. van Gennep, was the first person to distinguish rites of passage as a distinct category of ritual, in his book *Les Rites de Passage*, published in 1909. His work immediately made a great impression on all scholars working on the interpretation of the rituals of what were then called primitive and are here called tribal societies, though many of the rituals considered by van Gennep were ancient Roman, Greek or Near Eastern, and Hebraic, Christian and Islamic. Van Gennep pointed out that many of these rituals showed a 'passage' in location or in time, and he showed conclusively that the rituals could be broken into three phases: first, a 'preliminal' phase in which the persons or groups who were the subjects of the ritual were *separated* from their previous social condition; secondly, a 'liminal' phase in which they were in a *marginal* situation; and finally a third 'postliminal' phase in which they were *reaggregated* to their previous social condition or *aggregated* to a new social condition, sometimes in the idea of resurrection. He stressed that these three phases, found in similar form in many societies, correspond to underlying necessities of social life: all social life involves movement in space, in time, and in social situation, and certain of these movements are marked by ritual transitions.

Van Gennep began his analysis by pointing to the high significance in many cultures of the threshold of a house, and the care with which this is built with ritual or magical accompaniments, or marked by religious protection, notably in the concept of the Roman god Janus, who looked both ways (see JANUS); while Orthodox Jews still fix to their doorways the *mezuzah*, a small case containing religious texts, sometimes even putting one on the doorway of each room.



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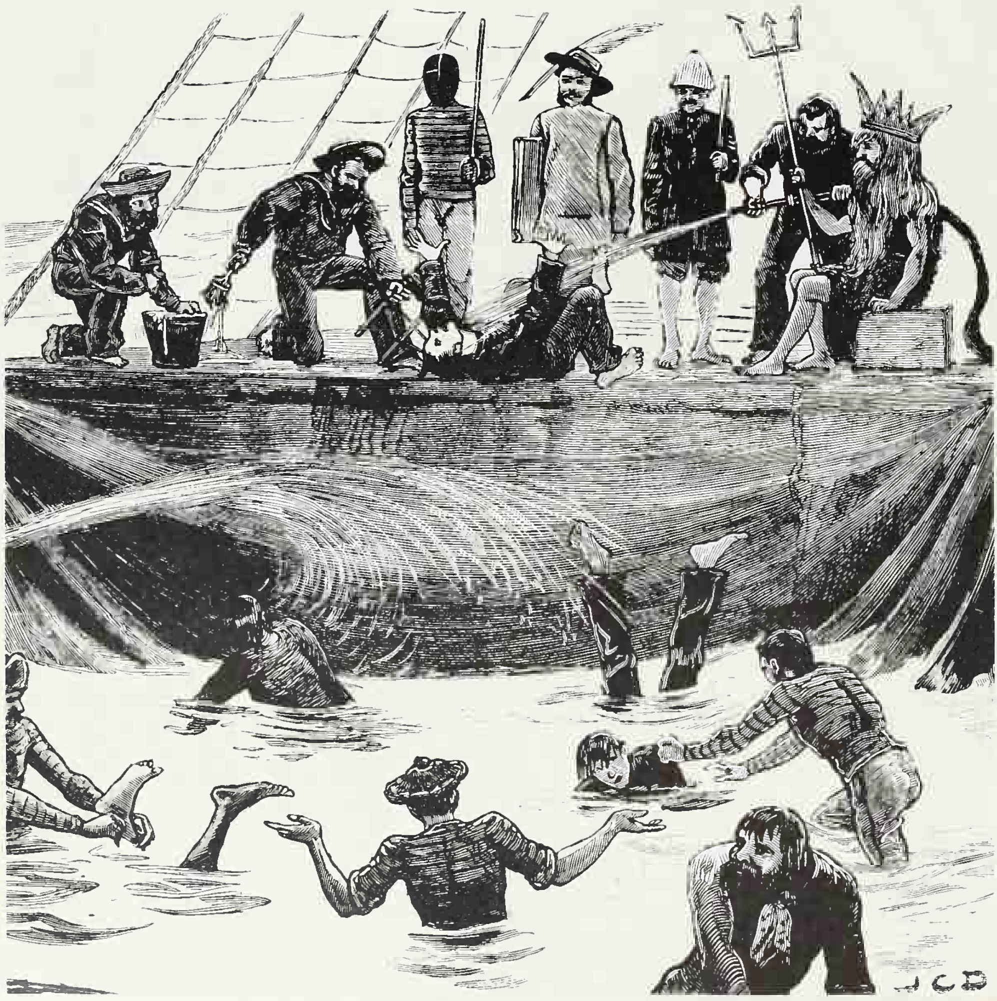

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Although many rites fall into disuse with the technical and economic development of society, some still survive; frequently however, lacking any framework of belief, they are preserved only for sentimental reasons. The maritime initiation of those crossing the Equator for the first time (*left, above and below*), though of comparatively recent origin, is seldom observed today, but the liminal rite (*above*) of carrying a bride across the threshold of her new home is still very often performed, even if in a lighthearted spirit

The doorway to a house marked a transition from one world of relationships to another: from this developed special types of ritual which marked the crossing of the threshold (Latin *limen*, from which the word 'liminal' comes to describe such rituals).

Van Gennep then proceeded to look at a whole series of characteristic rituals present in situations which involve changes in social conditions: The erection of houses, the commencement of agricultural activities, the gathering of first fruits and harvest, birth, marriage, funerals, ordination and the initiation of youths or girls into manhood and womanhood. These are but a few examples from the multitude of occasions which van Gennep showed to be marked by separation, marginal and aggregatory rites.

It may easily be seen how the analysis of these rites was related to his starting point, the building of the house. From our own customs we can instance the symbolic carrying of a bride by her husband across the threshold of their new home, a liminal rite which marks her movement after the wedding ceremony from her residence in her natal home to her residence in her conjugal home, with all which that movement marks in the alteration of her roles. Similarly, in some cultures a corpse cannot be carried out of a house over the sacred threshold but has to be taken out through a window, or through an opening deliberately broken in the wall.

Van Gennep's theory immediately made a profound impression on scholars studying ritual. In fact his phrase, *rites de passage*, passed in its French form into all anthropological literature. The subjects dealt with most commonly under this heading were rites of birth, puberty, initiation into manhood and womanhood (which van Gennep carefully pointed out did not necessarily correspond with puberty) and burial.

Cutting the Apron Strings

The nature of these rites can be briefly illustrated with examples: the rites, for example, surrounding the circumcision of boys of southern African tribes on their initiation into manhood.

They first undergo separation rites, such as jumping over fire or water, which exhibit clearly the main purpose of the ritual – to separate them symbolically from the ignorance of boyhood and from the company of their mothers. These initial rites culminate in circumcision at a spot in the bush, on which no woman must look.

The boys are then segregated during a marginal period, while the circumcision wounds heal, in a lodge of brushwood built out of sight of the women. There they learn special actions, songs and formulas, often meaningless (though said to be in an ancient language), and wear special costumes marked by special colours.

Early records stated that this symbolic cutting of the apron strings holding a boy to his mother was complete: more recent research has shown that the boys' mothers must collaborate in some of the rites of this marginal period, because they have a duty to assist their husbands in altering the tie of sons with mothers, so that the sons can grow up to be independent men. Thus, in some rites, men and boys sing songs through the cold of the winter night; and the women have to huddle in the open, on the edge of the village, around inadequate fires, ready to respond with ululations to the ending of each song. This response is said to be essential to help the boys to grow up.

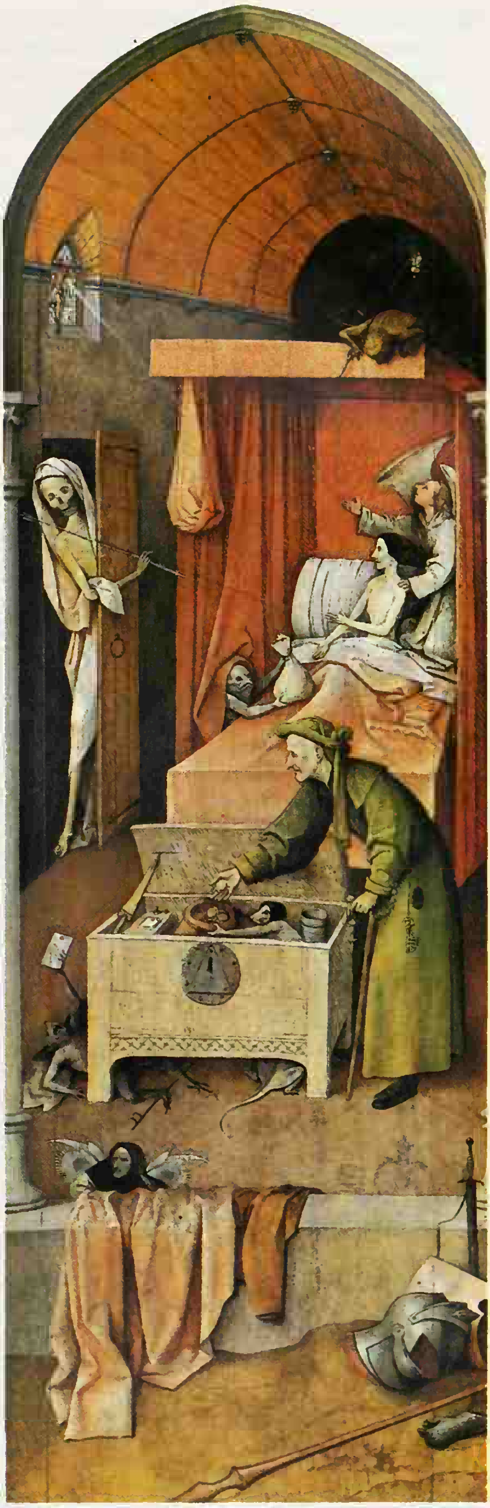
When the circumcision wounds have healed, the boys are finely dressed and are allowed to appear to their mothers: these strain to get at their sons, but are driven off, often with real struggles, by the men. In some tribes the menfolk are assisted by masked and clothed figures who represent ancestral spirits.

This temporary aggregation of the initiates, when their mothers can see them but not touch them, is succeeded by a less restricted marginal phase when they can be seen by the women at a distance, and even visited by their pre-nubile sisters. Finally, in a great celebration, the boys are brought, in smart new clothes, to dance in the village and to be surrounded by their mothers, who can now scoff at the previously feared masked figures. Whatever their actual age, the boys emerge socially as men, who may begin sexual relationships, are forbidden to sleep in a hut with their mothers and are allowed to sit with the men.

Time in Limbo

A second example of a rite of passage is the funeral. This often consists of an elaborate complex of rites, broken into three distinct phases. After the burial, both the mourners and the dead person's spirit enter a marginal phase. The mourners' behaviour is marked by many taboos and special modes of behaviour, dress and adornment or lack of adornment. At this time, the spirit of the deceased may be believed to be making an arduous journey to the 'world of spirits', or else, in societies where there is a cult of ancestral worship, it may be conceived to be wandering loose, homeless and restless. Finally, after this marginal period, aggregation rites are held, either to mark the entry of the spirit to the world of spirits, or else to institute the spirit among the ancestors.

The 'passage' theme is evident in wedding rites, as it is in such ceremonies as initiation to special societies or the ordination of a priest or consecration of a church, even though in our own culture such rites are often much attenuated. It appears also in seasonal festivals such as the celebration of the New Year, the gathering of first fruits and Harvest Festivals.



***Death of a Miser*, by Hieronymus Bosch: death is another rite of passage, the funeral formally separating the dead man from his previous condition. There may then be a marginal phase, in which the spirit is thought to be wandering, and finally 'aggregation' rites to mark its entry to the spirit world**

National Gallery, Washington/Samuel E. Kress Foundation

At the festival of first fruits the whole of a classical or tribal society might perform rituals which marked the separation of the people – often represented by their leaders – from their normal way of life, and their entry into a marginal period when they had to observe many taboos, such as not eating particular foods and not speaking loudly, save in the performance of special rites. In this marginal phase normal rules might be suspended.

Forbidden Marriage

Great festivities, dancing and drinking, mark the aggregation into the New Year. Sometimes, in societies without well-organized government, these are the occasions when normally highly independent sections of society, potentially hostile to each other, will show their unity in common festivals: during this period marriages, which are likely to occur between these different sections of the community and may cause strife, are prohibited.

Van Gennep was correct in pointing out that rites of this kind fall into disuse with the technical and economic development of society, though some remain. To refer this change to a decreasing interest in the sacred, and its separation from the profane, seems inadequate. The present writer has suggested an alternative explanation, that in tribal and other societies individuals perform their roles (filial, parental, political, economic, religious, educational, etc) in the same places, with largely the same material belongings, in relationships with largely the same set of other persons. These societies are marked by highly ceremonious or even ritualized behaviour, which marks the special relationships in terms of which a person is acting, or the role he is performing, in a

Old Skins for New

When the Vugusu initiates have stayed in the circumcision hut for several months the elders of each lineage meet and agree to brew the *gamalua gexuxualuxa*, 'the beer of getting out', with which the elders celebrate the conclusion of the period of initiation... Early in the afternoon the initiates walk down to the nearest stream and wash off the white clay with which they were painted while they lived in the initiation hut. Then they exchange their old skins for new ones which their fathers have prepared for them...

Washed, shaven, and clad in their new skins, the initiates are now called *vátembete*, the 'new and soft ones'. They are now ready to return to their fathers' homesteads where all their relatives and neighbours have gathered to drink the 'beer of getting out'. When they arrive there they are served with large quantities of cooked bananas which are poured out for them on a wicker door...

When the initiates have finished their meal their fathers or other elders hand them shields, spears, clubs, and other weapons. Holding these weapons like a warrior and standing straight and steady, one boy after the other moves to the centre of the yard of his 'old father' (his father's eldest brother) where, in the order of seniority, every initiate is given extensive rules of conduct by his father. When addressing his son the father stands in front of him and, before every sentence he utters, takes a draught of beer from a new gourd, swallowing some and spitting the remainder at his son's face and chest. He gives him the following rules:

'My son, you have left behind "the mother's cloth" (i.e. the prepuce), but now you are given the father's cloth... Now you are a man. No longer ride on a cow or an ox! Do not dance about standing on one leg, because this is childish and a disgrace for a man... Do not join the women when they sit together and talk about their own things. If you go there you will hear foolish things and become a fool yourself. Go where the old men are sitting and join them!'

G. Wagner *The Bantu of North Kavirondo*

Marriage ceremonies frequently follow the same basic pattern as other rites of passage: a young couple are purified from all evil influences by pouring the blood of a sacrificed chicken over their heads; part of a ceremony among the Land Dyaks of the Sadong River in Sarawak

particular place at a particular time. The ritualization is achieved by attaching occult power to the acting – directly, or invertedly, or symbolically – of specific secular roles. The ceremoniousness serves symbolically to segregate roles and relationships where this cannot be done materially. In an industrialized society, on the other hand, people commonly interact in their various activities with a wide range of individuals, in many different buildings using different material goods: roles and relationships are materially and not ceremoniously or ritually segregated, and for this reason there is no ritualization of secular roles.

(See also BIRTH; BURIAL; FIRST; HARVEST; INITIATION; MARRIAGE; THRESHOLD.)

MAX GLUCKMAN

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What is the underlying purpose of ritual? Analysis of the place of ritual within tribal groups suggests an answer to this complex question

RITUAL

MANY DIFFERENT kinds of phenomena have been described as ritual. The term has been applied, for example, to the mating habits of birds and animals, such as the dance on the water of the crested grebe; by psychoanalysts to the obsessive behaviour of neurotics, as when a man persistently checks whether he has turned off a tap, only to check anew after each check; and by anthropologists and sociologists to the established forms of behaviour of devotees of cults and religions. But while it is important to try to establish common explanations for the phenomena thus categorized, it is essential to grasp that there are fundamental differences between them and also between modes of interpreting them.

Freud himself argued that there were marked similarities between the obsessive 'rituals' of neurotics and psychotics, and the 'rituals' of what he called primitive society. Indeed, he postulated in *Totem and Tabu* (1913) from his theory of the development of the Oedipus complex (a theory derived from depth analyses of his patients), that the origin of sacrifice and religion in general was to be derived from a primordial killing and devouring of a patriarchal male, who dominated a group of females and their offspring, by the young males of the group. Overcome with guilt, they instituted a symbolic rekilling of the father-figure, now transformed into a god, and partaking of his being in a ritual of sacrifice and communion. If this be taken as what the anthropologist A. Kroeber called a 'Just-so Story' (that is, a story which explains the origin of some well-known phenomenon), then there is no evidence for it, and more recent studies of the social life of the apes make it highly improbable. On the other hand, Kroeber allowed that it might represent a psychological process which most human males undergo, in symbolical form, in the course of their development. Then it might well be one of the springs of emotion which feed into social rituals. Even so, sociologists and anthropologists would argue that Freud's theory cannot be used to explain the development, and the complexity, of the social and cultural relationships involved in rituals.

Variations in Response

Similarly, anthropologists would reject any claim by psychoanalysts that, for example, circumcision ceremonies of boys near puberty can be 'explained' by saying that they create castration-anxiety and fix the incest taboo firmly in the boys' minds. While the above is the standard psychoanalytical explanation of circumcision, one psychoanalyst, B. Bettelheim, has argued from a study of four schizoid children who developed their own initiation ceremonies, that the practice of circumcision arises among males through envy of the productive wombs of females.

Anthropologists would concede that particular persons, passing through circumcision ceremonies, may feel castration-anxiety or womb-envy; but that this would have to be demonstrated by appropriate methods of research, and that the structure of the personalities of the persons enforcing, or undergoing, such ceremonial operations should be taken into account. It may well be that in all men and women, at very deep levels of the psyche, similar syndromes of feeling are to be found; but psychoanalysis itself shows that people vary in their degree of adjustment to those syndromes, in their more conscious feelings and their actions. Thus there is a considerable degree of variation in both the type and the intensity of individuals' reaction to participation in the same ritual.

Examples of this were noted by the present writer at circumcision ceremonies held among certain African tribes. At the ritual circumcision each candidate (aged from seven to 15), while being operated on, should be supported by his father, who is supposed to hold his son's penis and help the circumciser, a ritual adept, turn back the foreskin. On one occasion, the hands of the first father shook so much that it was impossible for the circumciser to act; and the father was replaced by his brother-in-law, the boy's mother's brother, who strictly was not appropriate. The hands of the second father were very steady, and he watched the operation steadily. The hands of the third father were steady, but he could not watch the operation and turned his head away to look over his shoulder. One must draw the conclusion that the circumcision of each boy meant something quite different to each father, in terms of present relationships, of what each had felt and suffered when he himself as a boy underwent the operation, of the psychological syndromes established in each during infancy, and so on. Hence it seems that psychological analysis can only be effective if it is applied to bring out the significance of a particular ritual, or part of a ritual, for particular individuals, each with his own history of psychological development and his own established personality. Thereafter psychological analysis may feed into sociological-anthropological analysis; and of course the reverse is also true.

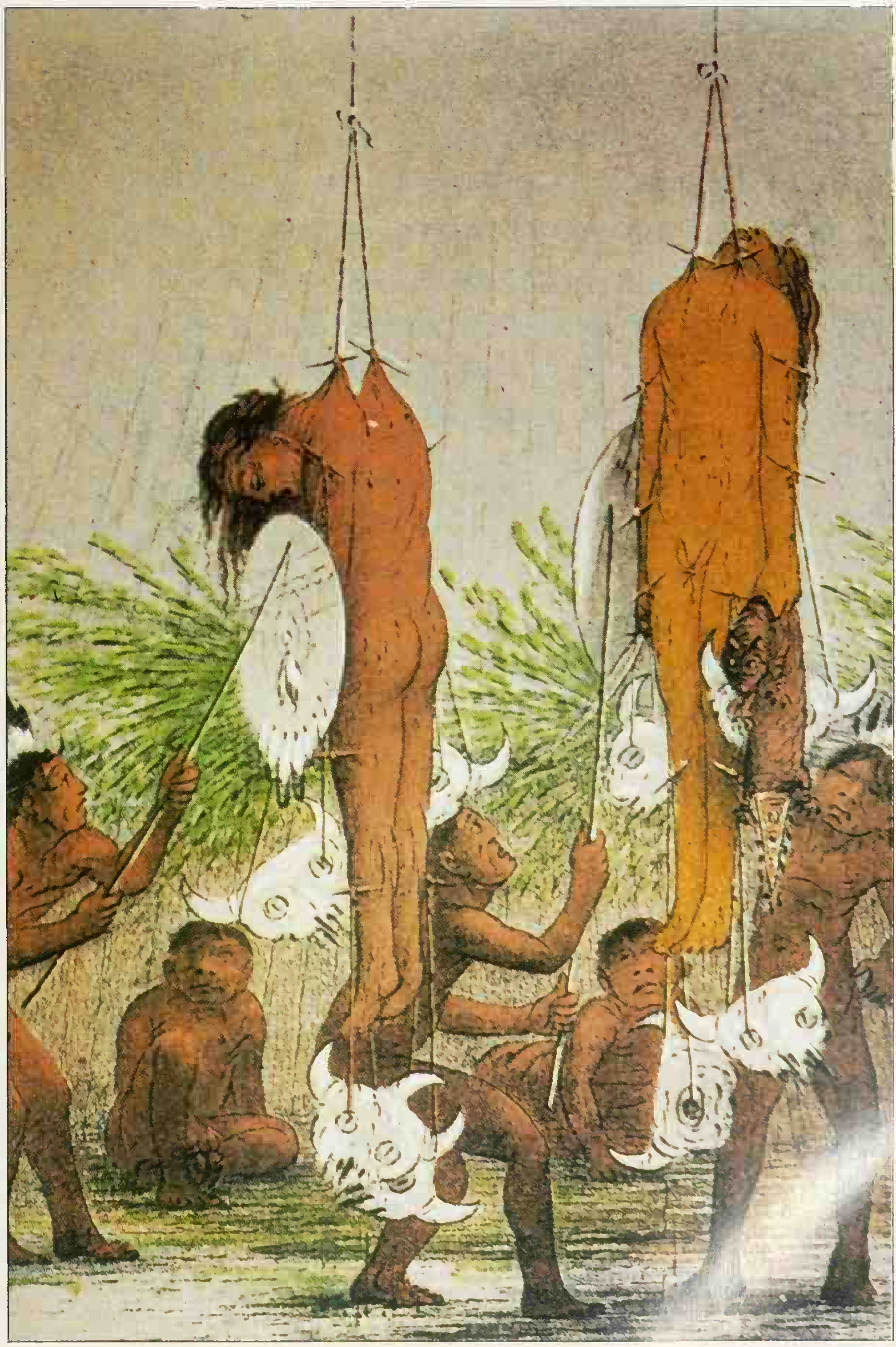
Swazi Songs of Hate

The Swazi of southern Africa, at the ripening of the first fruits, stage elaborate national ceremonies, at certain phases of which they are required to hurl insults at their king, who is the central figure of the rituals, and to sing sacred national songs stating how much the king is hated by his subjects. In social-anthropological analysis these rites have been successfully related to the low density of population as a result of the simple system of husbandry; the low variation in standards of living; and the delegation of authority from the king to subordinates ruling numbers of men who, because of the simplicity of weapons, are all warriors, constituting a private army which can help its leader in attempts to gain power. These leaders are of royal blood and may organize rebellions aimed at the kingship. There is therefore present in the national ceremony a symbolic representation of political processes built into the nation, which is riven by periodic armed civil wars.

The rites emphasize that while the kingship itself is sacred and is 'strengthened' in the rites, the king is beset by internal enemies on whose loyalty he cannot rely. But this does not mean that each warrior who insults the king or who sings the songs of hatred against him, must necessarily have sentiments of disloyalty awakened, or go through a severe crisis of loyalty. For one warrior, though he may feel the sacredness of the occasion, it may be in some ways like a fete, a kind of carnival when licence is allowed. At the other extreme, other warriors may go through an emotional turmoil in which strong resentments against authority are awakened, and perhaps a reliving of childhood difficulties in their relationships with their fathers. Again, analysis of individual, possibly variable, reactions to ritual is required.

One must similarly reject any simple direct explanation of ritual as the expression of tension, of despair, of anxiety or aggression, or as the transference of stifled feelings of aggression onto scapegoats, or as simply and directly strengthening social sentiments. In the Swazi ceremony summarily analysed above, it is justified to say that the rites are calculated to arouse the sentiments that support national solidarity. Since we know that acting an emotion is likely to produce feelings of that emotion, it is probable that occasions of group celebration will arouse the sentiments which are appropriate to group solidarity and which support adherence to certain group values and morals, in most participants at least.

But we know equally well that the most complex and intensive reaction to a religious ceremony may come from the sinners in the congregation: they may be most deeply moved by emotions evoked by ritual, particularly ritual in which they have participated as children and as adolescents, and they may then feel determined during the ritual to sin no more. Their intensive emotional reaction may well be provoked by strong feelings of guilt and unworthiness. On the other hand, the man who conforms in his daily life with the precepts of religion and morality is likely to worship with a much more restrained and consistent devotion, while those who are betwixt and between will respond in moderate degree. So in the Swazi ritual cited above, loyal men may have their sentiments of patriotism evoked less strongly than the potential traitors.



Su Gooders/Royal Anthropological Institute

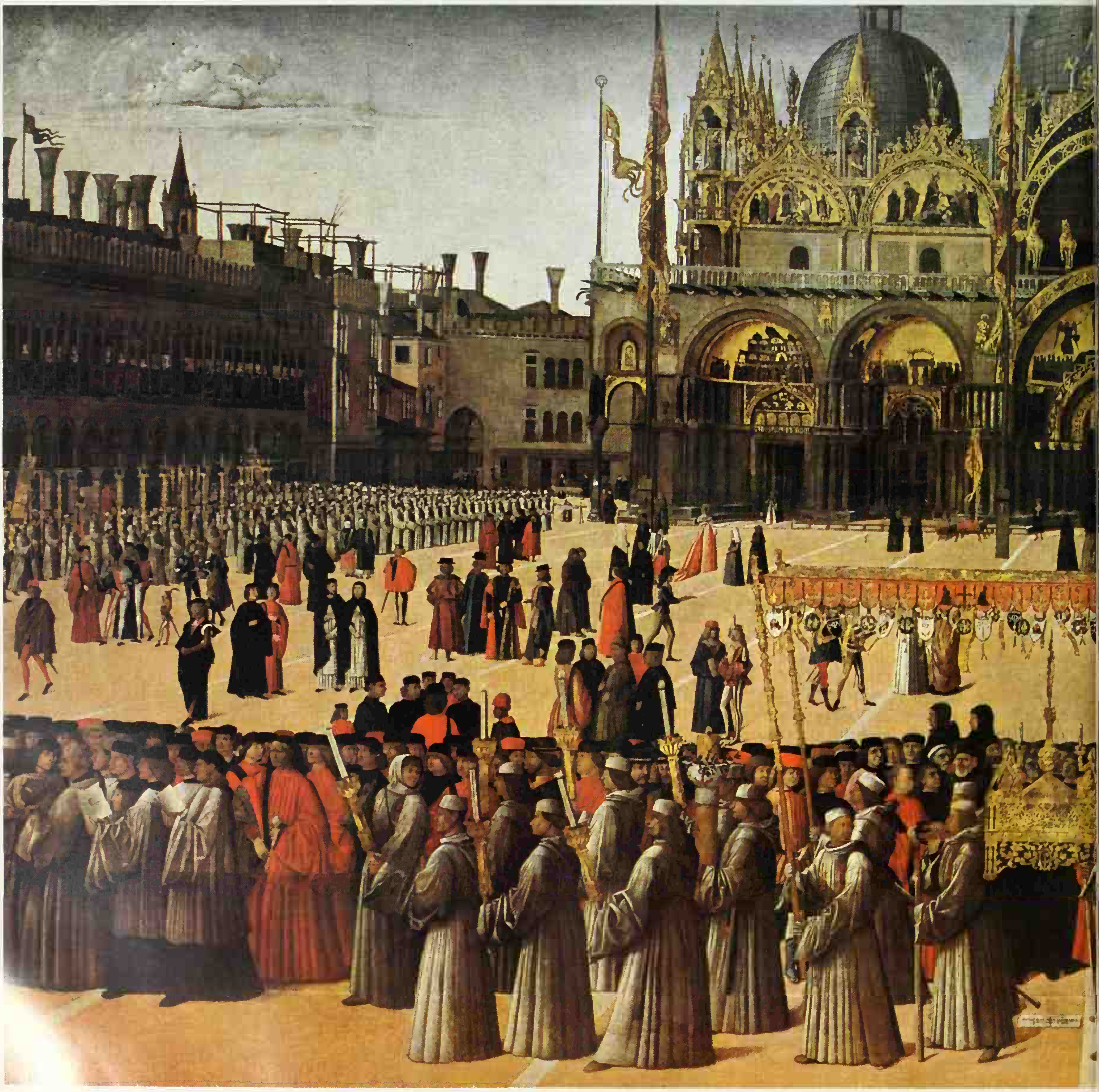
Mandan braves of North America enduring voluntary torture at the conclusion of a buffalo dance, part of the great annual ceremony called the Okipa: the dances lasted for many days and the myths of the origins of things were retold; by George Catlin, 19th century

Milk Tree Society

A much more complicated theory to relate rituals to emotional predispositions is therefore required, and the best as yet advanced is that of Victor W. Turner, in a series of analyses of the significance of ritual symbols. His highly complex argument can be summarized as follows. Information on the meaning of ritual symbols can be collected from participants, who will give interpretations of various degrees of complexity, depending on whether they are ritual adepts or not. In general, explanations of this kind stress the harmonious, socially valuable attributes of the symbol. Thus, when the Ndembu of Zambia, whom Turner studied, are initiating a nubile girl into womanhood, the key symbol is a tree which exudes a white substance, like milk. The Ndembu specifically compare the white sap of the 'milk tree' with mother's milk, and state that it represents the tie between mother and child: it thus represents the tie between the girl being initiated and her own mother, and her future, nurturing tie with the children whom it is hoped she will produce.

Further, since the Ndembu are a matrilineal society (reckoning descent and succession and inheritance from brother to sister's son), they are organized in groups of kinsfolk related to one another by descent through females. The milk tree therefore represents these groups, technically called matrilineages. As the matrilineages are the persisting groups of Ndembu society, and villages are to some extent combinations of matrilineages, the matrilineal principle in the abstract is vertebral to Ndembu society, and the milk tree symbolizes this, and symbolizes both the continuity of the society and its whole culture, its customs and its laws. In a graphic comparison, one of the Ndembu compared it with the Union Jack flying over the administrative headquarters of the district, then under British rule. He described the milk tree as 'our flag'.

But Turner showed that if one examined actions around the milk tree, in the ritual itself, these were not altogether harmonious, and did not reflect a continual state of harmony in accordance with the values stressed in the Ndembu's own account of the ritual. In practice, there was considerable competition and 'strife' among the people



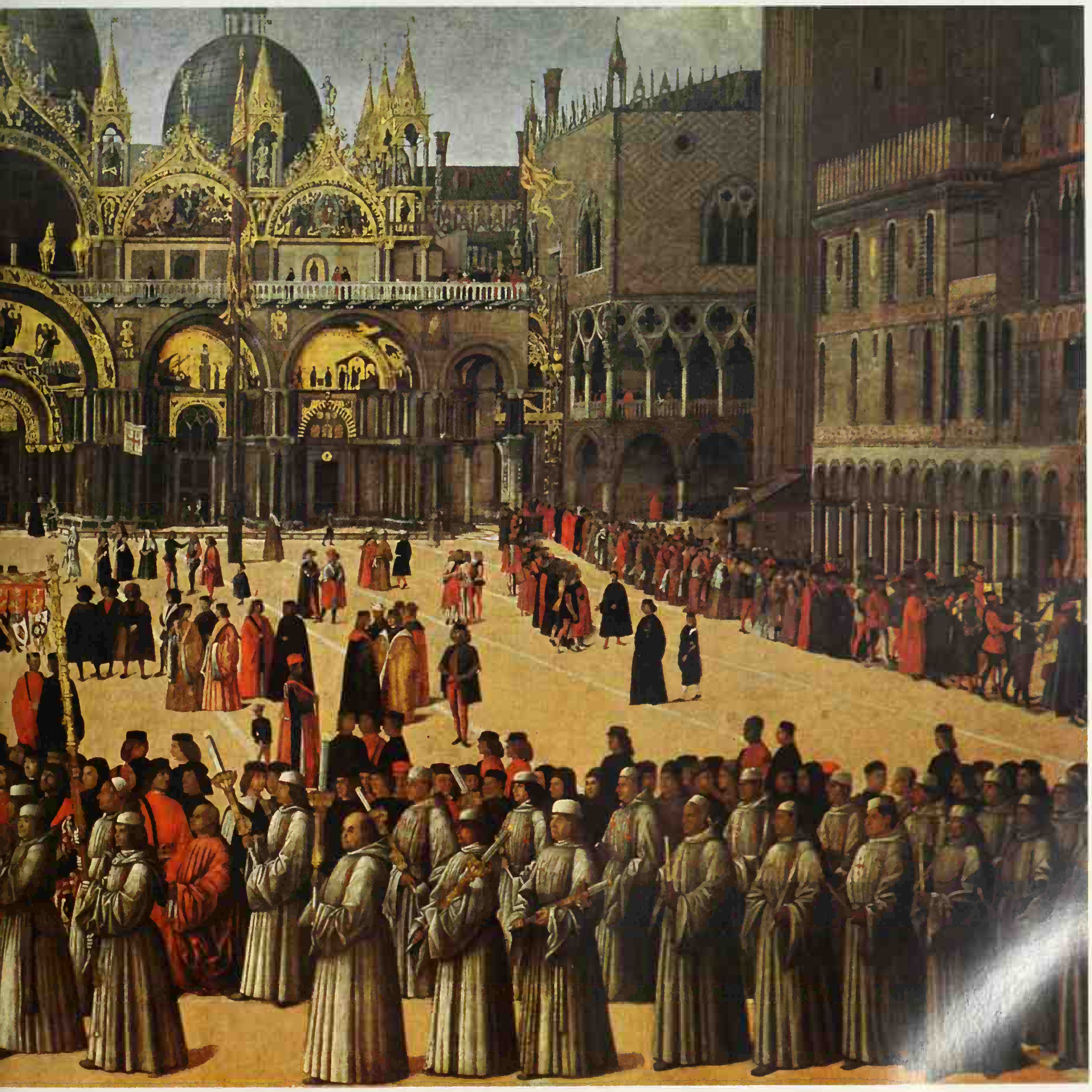
assembled around the milk tree. Women were separated from the men, and had to behave 'hostilely' towards them. Married women and unmarried girls, women of different matrilineages, and women of different villages, formed also competing pairs of contraposed groups. These alignments reflected the fact that while succession and inheritance passed through women, the women themselves dispersed, during their childbearing lives, to live at their husbands' villages – one example of the contradictory principles on which Ndembu society is built. These contradictory principles appear in the rituals and thus deny the very abstract harmony which is stated in the Ndembus' interpretation of them.

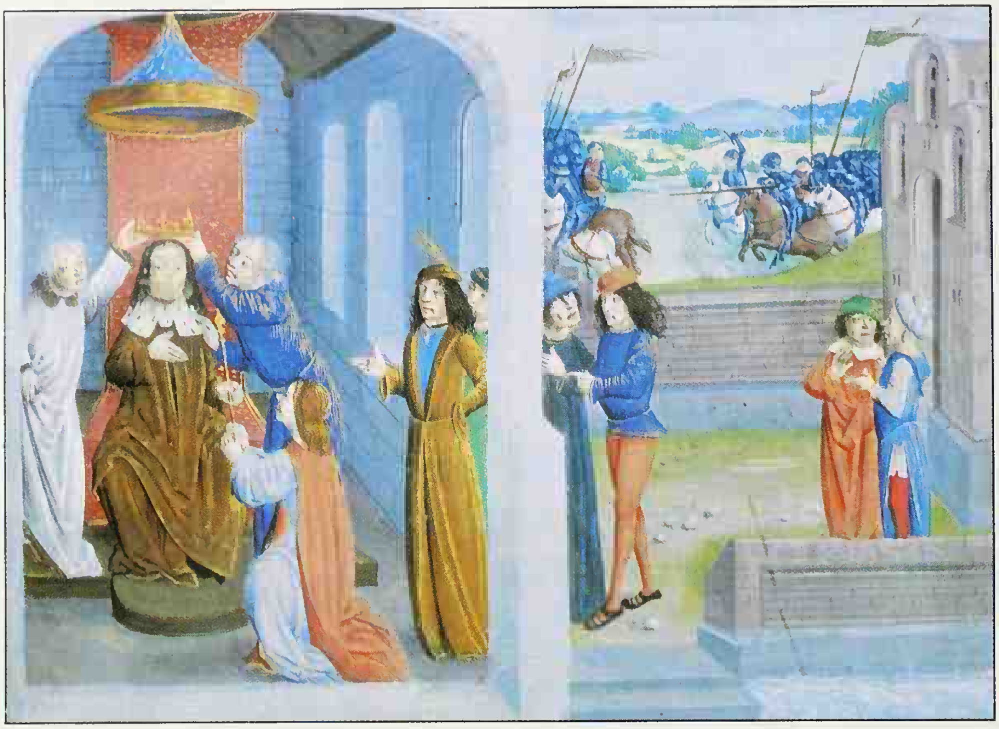
Duty Made Desirable

Turner shows that all the dominant ritual symbols of Ndembu society can be similarly analysed. His thesis is that two sharply different poles of reference for the symbols – the sensory and the ideological – must be distinguished. At the sensory pole are clustered meanings which refer to physiological facts and processes, such as mother's milk, blood, blood of menstruation and birth, semen, genitalia, copulation, excreta, death, and so on. While at the ideological pole are clustered social values and allegiances: conformity with law, morality and custom; motherhood as a nurturing relationship; the established relationships between women and men, married women and girls, membership of matrilineages and villages, and so on. Symbols cover these diverse meanings because they can condense many meanings, can unify disparate meanings and can polarize meanings.

Turner argues that in the course of ritual, marked by feasting, drinking, dancing and music – all physiologically stimulating – as well as by fellowship, strong and varied emotions are evoked in response both to the feasting, drinking and so on, and to the sensory associations of the rites and symbols. The energy thus aroused is then

Procession of penitents in Venice, a painting by Gentile Bellini: the rite is both a formal expression of repentance for sin and a way of arousing the emotion of repentance in the participants and spectators





The coronation of King Arthur, from a 15th century MS: one aspect of ritual is as a symbolic statement of status and, although the kingship itself never dies, a new ruler is not felt to be fully a king until the correct ritual of coronation has been performed

His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Trustees of Lambeth Palace Library

transferred to, and fixed upon, the values evoked at the ideological pole. Thus there occurs a process in which the obligatory is felt also to be desirable.

Clearly this theory involves a much more complex approach to the relation between emotions evoked and forms of ritual, than the notions briefly criticized above. We can appreciate why it is that singing songs of hate and hurling insults at the king may act to strengthen, at least temporarily, sentiments of loyalty to him. Moreover, it is a theory which is in accord with the psychoanalytic theory of the sublimation of instinctual drives and demands towards socially approved ends.

If the step from psychological interpretation of ritual to understanding of its sociological functioning is so complicated, it is even more mistaken to relate ritual directly to the behaviour of animals, in mating dances, display and the like.

Ritual from Relationships

Turner's theory was worked out on tribal rituals, but it seems that it could equally be applied to the ritual symbols of the great religions. These types of rituals, however, differ markedly from each other. Sociologists who have written on the general evolution of human society have all stressed that this development, associated with more complex technology and a greater division of labour, is marked by an increasing obsolescence of ritual and its replacement by what have been called universal religions, such as Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, which any person can join as a convert, and in which any adherent can join any congregation assembled to worship. The examples above, of the Swazi first fruits rites and the Ndembu nubility ritual, show that in tribal society rituals are constituted to specific social relationships according to the domestic, kinship, sexual, local or political affiliations of the members of the cult. Only persons occupying specific positions in those relationships can participate, and they do so in terms of the specific ways in which they are related to one another. Moreover, in the ritual, apart from using special symbols (in the form of things, words or actions), they act their specific roles in secular life, either directly, or sometimes invertedly (as in transvestism, by women dressing as men and men as women), or in some particular symbolic form. Hence an analysis of tribal rituals leads one into a detailed analysis of secular relationships because these are of the fabric of the ritual, and because it is believed that the symbolic representation of those relationships in some hidden, occult way creates and directs occult power so as to bless, purify, protect, strengthen, make fruitful and otherwise successful, the persons involved in those relationships.

This type of analysis has shown that in some of the rituals the enactment of secular relationships involves a statement, in an exaggerated form, not only of the harmonious and unifying aspects of the relationships, but also of the conflicts which reside in them. This is one of the main means by which emotion is aroused, which is then fixed on socially approved values: out of the very conflicts which exist in normal life, on special occasions the value of an ideal of life without conflict is emotionally and intellectually established.

It has therefore been argued that ritual, occult beliefs and practices will tend to occur in crisis situations in which the discrepant principles out of which social organization is formed, principles which are in conflict, produce actual or potential disputes which cannot be settled by judicial and other purely intellectual procedures. Ritual then may operate where there are fundamental disharmonies within the theoretical harmony of a social system.

This theory is based on the perception that in human, as against animal, society, there is a consistent tendency to exaggerate the differences between categories of persons. Thus belief in the occult contaminating effect of menstrual blood and its threat to things virile exaggerates the biological difference between women and men. There are other beliefs, and associated practices, of this kind, based on distinctions of age, the facts of locality, different kinds of relationship through birth and kinship, the relationship of ruler and subject, and so forth. This tendency is more marked in tribal society than in complex industrial societies where peoples' roles, the material things which they handle, the places they work and worship and play in, are more differentiated. This may explain why in tribal society we find a 'ritualization' of secular roles (see RITES OF PASSAGE), while as society develops a more complex technology on which is based a more complex division of labour, there is a movement towards universal religions.

E. R. Leach and other anthropologists have argued from studies of tribal rituals that ritual is only a symbolic statement of status. This is undoubtedly one of the aspects of ritual, as has been shown. Others assert that rituals mainly manifest competition for power. This too is present in tribal rituals, and is also to be found within the congregations of universal religions. But there is clearly much more to ritual than these two aspects.

Complex problems are involved in the question of when actions referring to beliefs in occult power occur, and how they operate. It therefore seems advisable to use a more complicated vocabulary in discussing these problems. The term *ceremonial* may be used to describe all actions which involve symbolic statements of social status (for instance, All Saints' Day and the October Revolution parade). As a further distinction, *ceremoniousness* could be used to describe ceremonial where the practitioners have no idea of occult powers being involved (such as standing when *God Save the Queen* is played). Ritual describes ceremonial where ideas of occult power are present. Within the field of ritual in this sense, there is in tribal society a *ritualization* of secular social roles, of domestic places, and so forth. As this ritualization decreases with advancing civilization, some religions will be austere, while others will be marked by a high *ritualism*, symbolic itself, drawing on the same complex of emotions maybe, but not involving the enacting of everyday roles.

MAX GLUCKMAN

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The summoning up of a 'spirit', a powerful supernatural entity or force, is the principle ceremony of European ritual magic

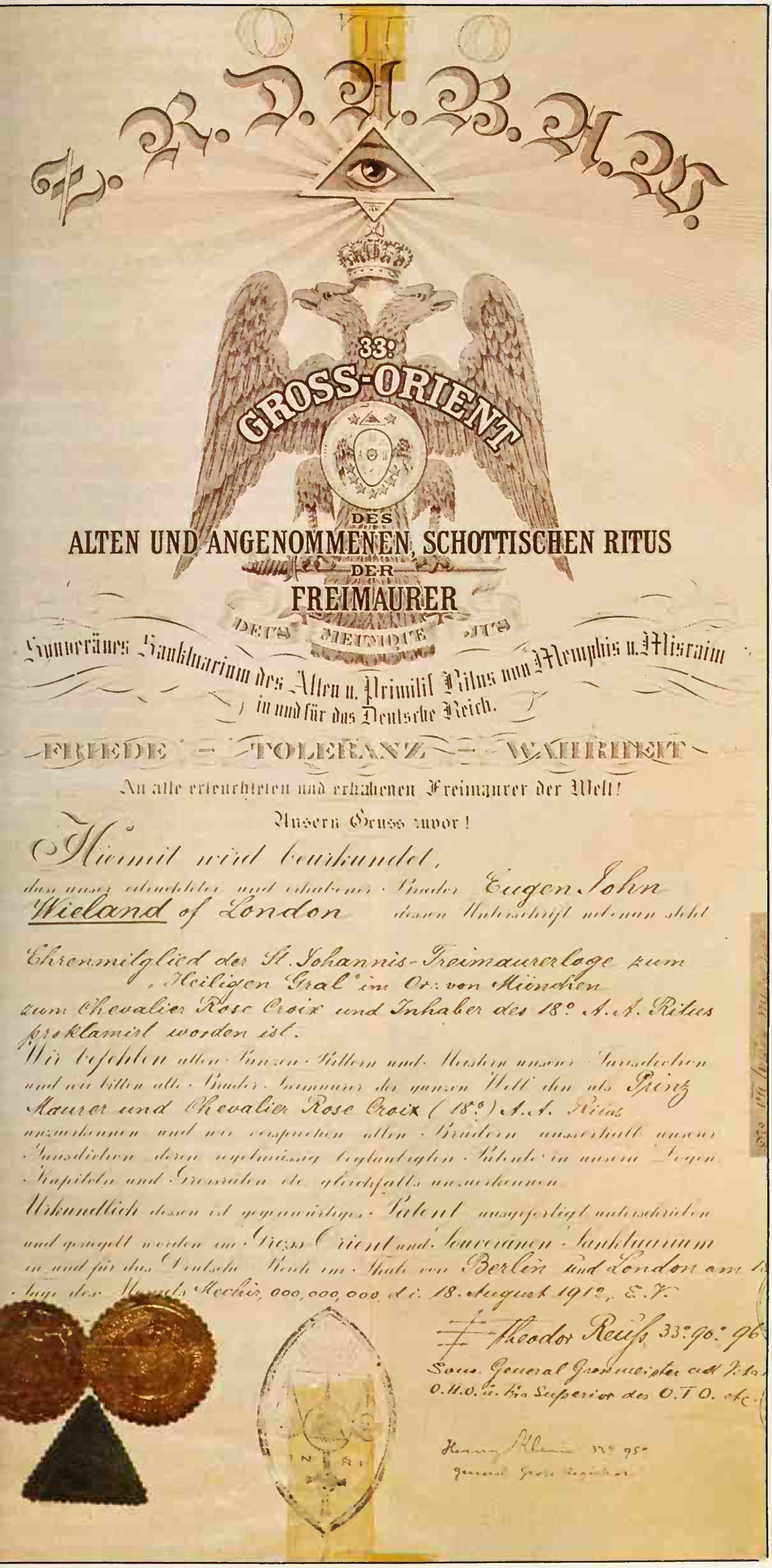
RITUAL MAGIC

THE EUROPEAN magical textbooks, or grimoires (see GRIMOIRE), contain all sorts of processes, including instructions for making love talismans or wax images, but they reserve their most impressive ceremonials for the attempt to summon up a 'spirit', a supernatural force or entity of some kind, which can be subjugated by the magician and forced to carry out his orders or reveal what it knows. It is this type of operation to which, in the European context, the term 'ritual magic' particularly refers.

The ceremonies in the grimoires naturally vary in detail but there is a clear general pattern. The spirit is summoned and dominated in a series of commanding incantations, through which the magician brings all the resources of his will to bear on the operation. But before he can begin the ceremony itself, he must make the necessary preparations.

A magical operation of any difficulty cannot be performed in a normal condition of mind and body, and the magician must begin by 'consecrating' or dedicating himself to the work, in the sense of cutting himself off from his everyday surroundings and concerns, and excluding all distractions from his mind. The methods of doing this, recommended in all the grimoires, are continence and fasting, cleanliness and devout prayer to God. The *Heptameron* or *Magical Elements* (attributed to a 14th century authority on medicine, Peter of Abano, but probably dating from the 16th century) says that: 'The operator should be clean and purified for the space of nine days before beginning the work; he should be confessed also, and should receive the Holy Communion.' Abstinence must be positively reinforced by concentration on the work in hand. *True Black Magic* (an 18th century French derivative of the *Key of Solomon*) says that the magician must fast and be chaste, must 'abstain from every labour of soul and body', and must 'meditate on those things which he is about to put in practice for nine complete days before undertaking the work'.

The insistence on austerity and the presence of prayers and celebrations of Holy Communion in these rituals, are surprising at first sight but are the result of the principle that magical power works automatically and regardless of motives. God's power can be tapped by the use of his name and through forms of prayer to him. The Mass brings into the magician's body and soul the power of the consecrated host. Confession and abstinence rid him of impurities on which



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DES
ALTEN UND ANGENOMMENEN, SCHOTTISCHEN RITUS
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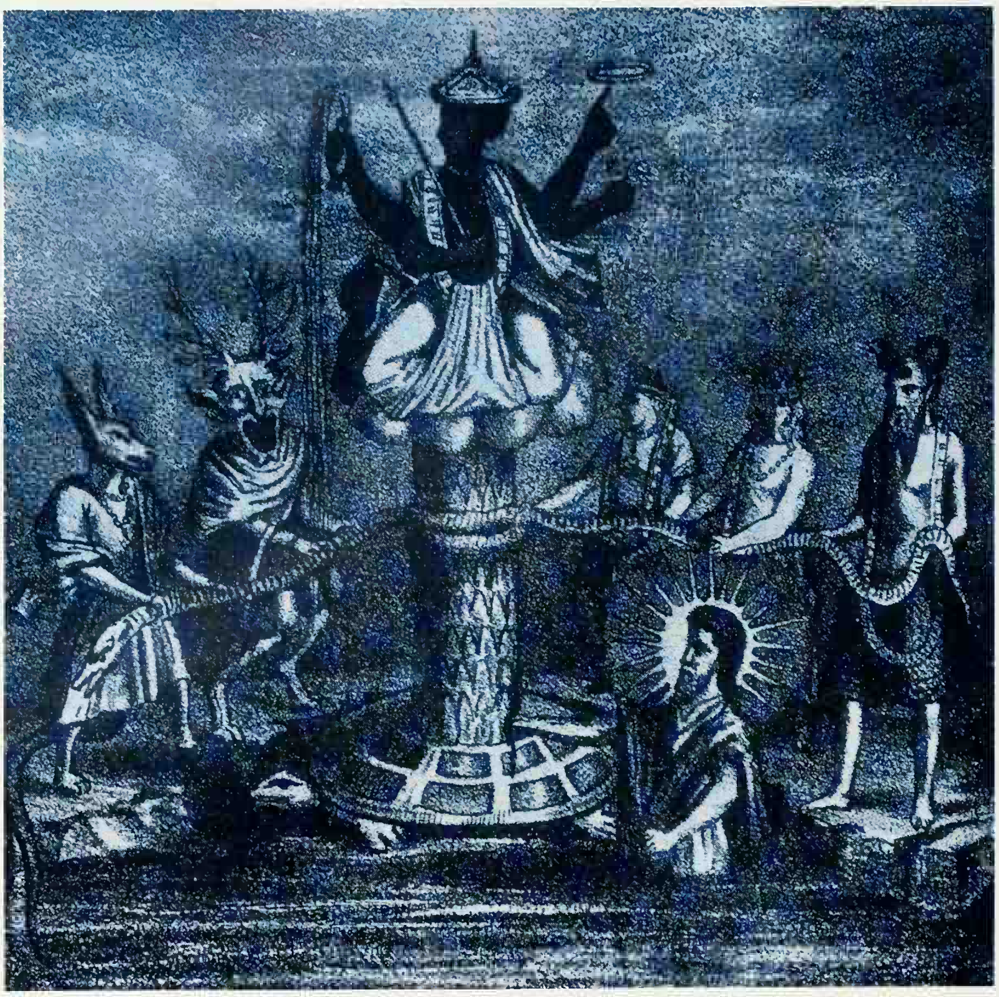
in und für das Deutsche Reich im Thale von Berlin und London am 1
Tage des Monats Mechir, 000,000,000 d.i. 18. August 1912, E.V.

Theodor Reuss 33°.90°.96°
Souv. General Grossmeister ad Vitam
O.H.O. u. Superior des O.T.O. etc.

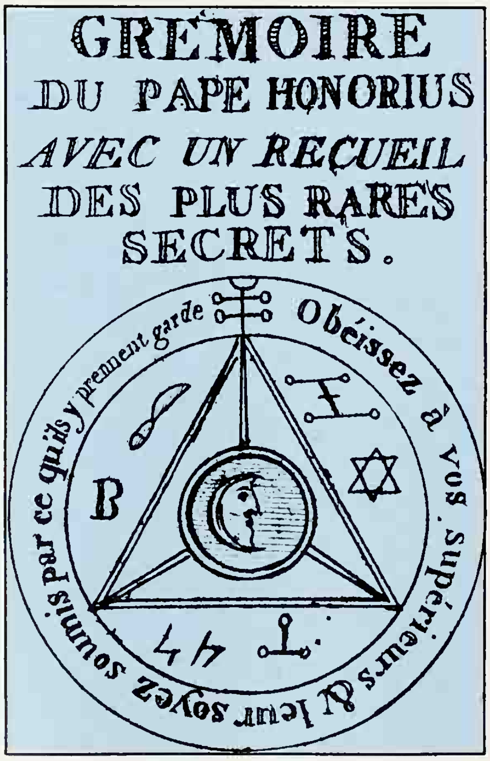
Henry Klein 33° 95°
General Gross Registrar

Certificate of membership in the *Ordo Templi Orientis* (Order of Templars of the East) a German magical society, founded early in this century, which concentrated on the use of sexual techniques in ritual magic: Aleister Crowley became its British head

Gerald Yorke Collection/Michael Holford



Modern magicians have been influenced by Egyptian and Graeco-Egyptian texts, and by Indian beliefs, as in this illustration of 'the mystery of universal equilibrium', by Eliphas Levi *(above)*. But the main line of the European tradition runs through textbooks like the *Grimoire of Honorius*: frontispiece of a French edition, probably of the 18th century *(below)*



GREMOIRE
DU PAPE HONORIUS
AVEC UN RECUEIL
DES PLUS RARES
SECRETS.

Obéissez à vos supérieurs & leur soyez soumis par ce qu'ils y prennent garde
B

the spirit that is to be summoned might seize, or from a modern point of view rid him of trivial distractions which would weaken his concentration.

Abstinence also helps build up the magician's own powers. By remaining chaste he creates a reservoir of sexual energy, by going short of food and sleep, he weakens his body and gives strange powers to his mind. Some modern magicians have tried to reach the same goal by the opposite route, using drink or drugs or sex, separately or in combination, to put themselves into a state of physical exhaustion combined with a heightened mental condition.

Washing is also recommended, again to banish impurities or distractions. In the *Key of Solomon*, which recommends nine days of austerity before the operation begins, the magician is instructed to immerse himself in water which has been blessed by a priest, saying a prayer in which he states his own divine potential as the earthly image of God and asks for God's grace. 'O Lord Adonai, who hast formed me, thy unworthy servant, in thine image, from plain earth: bless and sanctify this work, for the cleansing of my soul and body, and may no deceit or stupidity be here. O most powerful God, through whose power the people were able to walk through the Red Sea from Egypt: give me this grace, purified and cleansed by this water, pure in thy presence.'

If the novice magician has not been put off by the austerities recommended, he may quail at the list of magical 'weapons' or instruments which he requires. *True Black Magic*, for instance, says he will need a sword, a staff, a wand, a lancet, a hook, a sickle, a poniard, a white-handled knife and a black-handled knife, the last of these being used for drawing the magic circle. Aleister Crowley's list of magical weapons includes swastika, crown, wand, crook, sword, spear, scourge, lamp and girdle, apron, sandals, dagger, tripod, cup, cross and sickle.

These instruments should be made by the magician himself (or as a second-best he may buy them, provided they are brand new) and the directions for manufacturing them and 'consecrating' them to the work are of daunting complexity. A comparatively simple example is *True Black Magic's* sickle, which must be made of virgin steel and forged on the day and in the hour of Jupiter. It must be doused under moonlight with a mixture of mole's blood and pimpernel juice. A horn handle must be fitted to it in the hour of Jupiter and an incantation 'by the authority of God the Father Almighty' recited over it to infuse it with power. It must be kept until needed in a new wrapping of red silk.

Whether many magicians ever provided themselves with all the accessories or followed all the difficult and taxing directions seems doubtful. The main underlying purpose appears to be psychological. The magician must make his own instruments and follow complicated procedures as a way of totally involving himself and all his faculties in the work, of stretching to the limit his qualities of application and determination. The essential requirement is that his weapons must be 'virgin', not previously owned or used by anyone else. This is partly because a virgin weapon has its full potentiality intact, none of its energies having been dissipated, and partly because it is considered dangerous to use anything secondhand in magic. A previous owner or use may have linked the weapon with undesirable or positively dangerous influences.

The principal weapons of the grimoires are the wand, sword and knife. The wand should be made of hazel wood and, according to the 18th century French *Grand Grimoire* should be 19½ inches long, cut at sunrise with the magic knife and fitted with pointed steel caps at each end (see WAND). The sword and knife should be forged or bought on the day and in the hour of Jupiter, at a time when the moon is waxing. Incantations are recited over them to give them power.

Robes and Circle

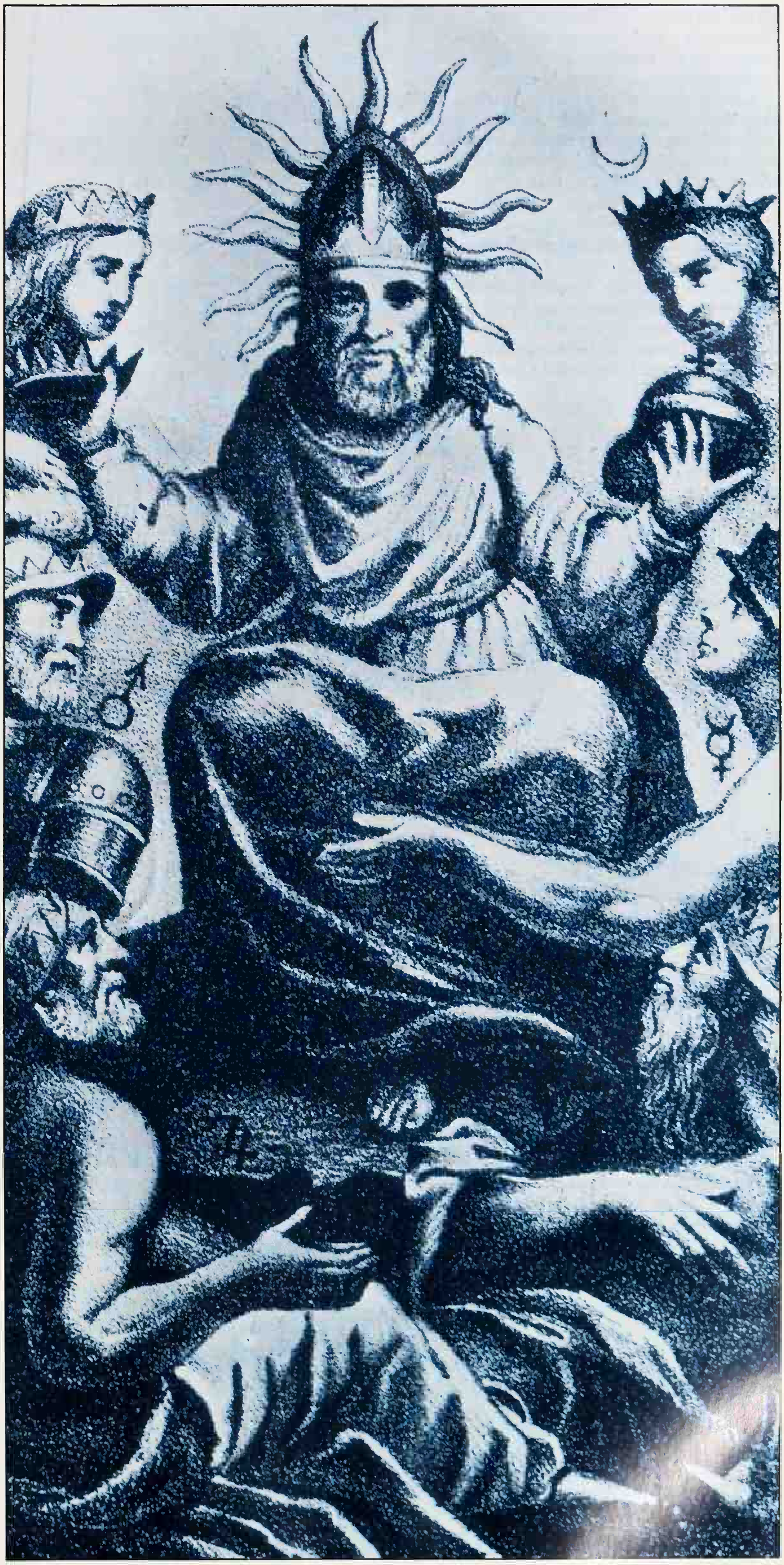
A secluded place should be chosen for the ceremony, so as to avoid interruptions. Somewhere which has a strong atmosphere of its own is desirable, so long as the atmosphere suits the type of ceremony to be performed. Ruins, graveyards, dark woods or crossroads would all be suitable for operations of destruction or communings with evil spirits. If the ceremony is performed indoors, all the windows and doors should be fastened and the room should be hung with drapes of a colour appropriate to the ceremony. Similarly, an appropriate time should be chosen, performing the operation in the hour of the planet to which it orresponds, and using accessories belonging the planet (see CORRESPONDENCES; AYS).

The grimoires recommend white robes, nough in black magical operations trappings of black or red would be more suitable. 'he 'Fourth Book' added to Agrippa's *ccult Philosophy* prescribes a robe of white nen, covering the body from the neck to ne feet, fitting closely and tied with a girdle. 'he *Key of Solomon* recommends white hoes, with magical symbols drawn on them, nd a crown of virgin white paper on which ames of God are written with 'the pen of ne art', one specially made and consecrated or the magician's purposes. So far as posible, buttons, buckles, knots and other astenings should be avoided because any astening tends to impede the flowing out of ne magician's power.

The colour white represents the purity, rom the magician's point of view at least, f his intentions, and in putting on his obes he is really putting on a suitable frame f mind. In the *Key*, while vesting himself in is robes, he repeats no less than seven salms and then says, 'Amor, Amator, mides, Ideodamiach, Amor, Plaior, Amitor. y the powers of those sacred angels I dress nyself in these powerful robes. And through nem I will bring to a successful conclusion ne things that I burn to accomplish: nrough thee, O most holy Adonai, and ny kingdom and rule is everlasting. Amen.'

Once robed, the magician can proceed to raw the magic circle. This acts as a barrier gainst all forces outside it and, even more nportantly, it focuses and concentrates ne forces inside it, the magical energy enerated in the ceremony (see CIRCLE). In ne *Key* the circle is drawn with the magic nife, at the end of a rope nine feet long. Names of power, crosses, pentagrams, exagrams, herbs and bowls of holy water re placed in the rim of the circle, to reinorce it. According to the *Lemegeton*, a riangle should be drawn outside the circle, wo feet away from it, and it is into this riangle that the spirit is summoned. The ame Michael is inscribed inside and the ames of power Anexhexeton, Tetragrammaon, Primematum are written along its edges.

Israel Regardie comments (in *The Tree f Life*) that the triangle is required in evocaion, when the magician summons up somehing from within himself and projects it nto the universe outside him, but not in nvocation, when the magician summons omething from outside himself, which takes lace entirely inside the circle. When leister Crowley and his pupil, the poet 'ictor Neuburg, conjured up the mighty lemon Choronzon in a ritual based on the *emegeton* and the *Grimoire of Honorius*, Crowley placed himself in the triangle, into which the demon was summoned, so offerng himself as the vehicle of its manifestation: ccording to some, he was possessed by the lemon for the rest of his life.



'he seven planets, with the sun at the centre: he planetary gods personify forces which ritual nagicians attempt to use in their operations vhich should be performed in the hour and day f the appropriate planet

The Perfumes of Venus

Pentagrams and hexagrams, drawn on parchment or engraved on an appropriate metal, may be placed in the circle or outside it, or worn or carried by the magician and his assistants. They protect against evil and they may be used for banishing irrelevant or disruptive influences before the main ceremony begins (see HEXAGRAM; PENTAGRAM).

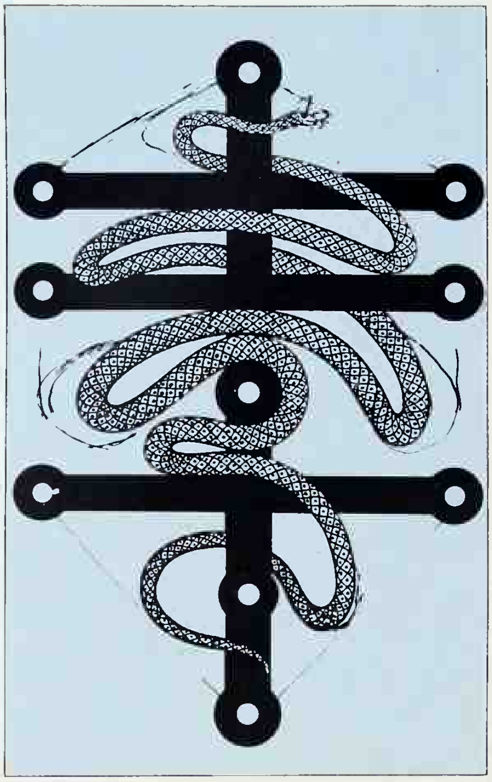
A small brazier is placed inside the circle (or sometimes outside it), on which a fire of charcoal is lit and various substances are burned. The choice of substance depends on the nature of the ceremony. For a work of Venus, for example, ambergris, aloes wood, musk, myrtle, rose, red sandalwood, pigeon's blood or sparrow's brain would create a suitable perfume. Like the colours, metals and other accessories, the perfume brings the appropriate planetary influence to bear on the operation. The fumes also provide material from which the spirit can make itself a visible body (see BREATH). It is likely that this is connected with the alchemical notion that when a substance is burned, the smoke given off is its 'spirit'.

But again the principal use of the fumigations is psychological. Like the whole apparatus of weapons, colours and symbols, the fumes help to intoxicate the magician's senses. It is worth noticing that some of the materials recommended for burning in black magical operations – henbane, for instance – give off fumes which may cause hallucinations and delirium.

It is important to have a clear mental picture of the spirit that is to be summoned. Its nature, attributes and appearance are formulated so as to build up a vivid image of it, on which the magician and his associates concentrate. The *Lemegeton* describes the appearance of 72 demons, presumably for this purpose. The spirit Orias, for example, who will teach the magician astrology and cause even his enemies to fear him, appears in the form of a lion riding on a great horse. He has a snake for a tail and in his hands he holds two more snakes. The 'Fourth Book' provides descriptions of spirits associated with the planets: a spirit of Mars may show itself as a king riding a wolf and holding a naked sword in his right hand and a severed human head in his left (see also RENAISSANCE).

In the modern magician's 'assumption of god-forms', a vivid picture of a deity's characteristic appearance, attributes, symbols and myths is built up and concentrated on while the god is invoked. The magician identifies himself with what he has pictured, a 'god' which is a great universal force or current, or 'aspect of cosmic life', which also has its existence in the human mind, and Crowley and other modern magicians have found the deities of ancient Egypt particularly suitable for this purpose.

In many of the processes in the grimoires an animal, usually a kid, is killed as part of the preliminaries and the magician uses its skin to make parchment, on which he inscribes pentagrams and other magical symbols. But sometimes the slaughtered animal is also a sacrifice. In the *Key* the magician decapitates the kid at one blow, naming the spirit he intends to summon and saying 'O high and powerful being, may this sacrifice be pleasing and acceptable to thee. Serve us faithfully and better sacrifices shall be given thee.'



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Drawing by Aleister Crowley of the Serpent of Wisdom coiling round the cabalistic Tree of Life: the Tree is regarded as a diagram of the universe and to follow the serpent's path is to 'rise through the spheres' to supreme power, to command in one's own being all the forces of the world

In modern rituals the sacrifice, if performed at all, is much more closely linked with the main ceremony itself and may occur at the height of it. When the animal is killed, its vital energy is believed to be liberated, so increasing the supply of force inside the circle. The fumes of its blood provide an additional supply of energy on which the spirit can fasten to make itself manifest. And again the killing contributes to the magician's intoxicated but masterful state of consciousness.

A bird or small animal may be slaughtered, or the magician may gash himself or one of his assistants so that the blood runs. If this is combined with the achievement of orgasm, a still greater 'charge' of energy is released into the circle and it is this sexual 'sacrifice' that some modern magicians regard as peculiarly effective.

In the Lake of Fire

When all is ready, and the magician and his assistants are in their places in the circle, the summoning of the spirit begins. It is summoned through the magic of language, the use of compelling incantations and 'names of power', which are believed to contain inherent force (see INCANTATION; NAMES). There is no single correct formula of incantation, and finding those which work is a matter of trial and error. The incantations begin quietly and gently but as they continue the magician gradually works up his own inner forces until he is in a state of fervid but still controlled ecstasy in which with every fibre of his being he commands and compels the spirit to appear.

Of all the grimoires, the *Lemegeton* has perhaps the most formidable armoury of incantations. The magician conjures the spirit by a battery of names of power to 'appear forthwith and show thyself to me, here outside this circle in fair and human shape, without horror or deformity and without delay'. If the spirit does not appear, this opening incantation is repeated a second time and, if necessary, a third, with the magician gradually introducing a more urgent and commanding note into his voice.

If the spirit has still not appeared, a second and stronger incantation is chanted, which may again have to be repeated a second and third time. The spirit is summoned with a great array of names of power, and the incantation ends with: 'By the dreadful Day of Judgement, by the Sea of Glass which is before the face of the Divine Majesty, by the four Beasts before the Throne, having eyes before and behind, by the Fire which is about the Throne, by the Holy Angels of heaven and the Mighty Wisdom of God, by the Seal of Basdathea, by the name Primematum which Moses uttered and the earth opened and swallowed up Corah, Dathan and Abiram, answer all my demands and perform all that I desire. Come peaceably, visibly and without delay.'

The magician is now working himself up to a high pitch of intensity and using a more compelling and dominating tone. If the spirit still fails to appear, he proceeds to a third conjuration, again to be repeated up to three times, in which he commands the spirit by the seven secret names with which Solomon mastered all demons and threatens it with the torments of hell. 'I will bind thee in the depths of the bottomless pit, there to remain till the Day of the Last Judgement. I will chain thee in the Lake of Eternal Fire and Brimstone . . .'

This should certainly force the spirit to appear, and he must be kept firmly in subjection to the magician's will. Once the magician has finished with him, the spirit must be forced to go away with the 'licence to depart'. This final stage of the ceremony is extremely important because the magician and his assistants cannot safely leave the circle until the spirit has been banished. Even if the spirit has apparently refused to answer the magician's summons, the formal licence to depart must be pronounced in case he is invisibly present.

The spirits of the *Lemegeton* are summoned for a variety of purposes, including harming the magician's enemies, gaining money, status and influence for him, and assisting him to slake his lust, but the majority of them are teaching demons. They supply him with knowledge about a large range of subjects, even including ethics, and they reflect the tradition of the Watchers, the rebel angels who first brought knowledge to men (see DEVIL). When a modern magician 'holds conversation' with what he has invoked (as distinct from evoking omething from himself and objectifying it), he learns what it has to teach, so to speak, by dentifying himself with it.

The Terrible and Invisible God

Modern magicians have taken much from he grimoires but they have also looked back beyond them to ancient Egyptian and Graeco-Egyptian rituals. The Golden Dawn (see GOLDEN DAWN) attached great importance to a Graeco-Egyptian magical text on which they based a ritual of invocation of the higher genius' or 'holy guardian angel', which is the magician's higher self. The angel' is invoked by incantations which declare its names and attributes and its supreme power. Then it is summoned. 'I nvoke Thee, the Terrible and Invisible God Who Dwellest in the void place of the Spirit. . . . Hear me and make all Spirits subject unto me, so that every Spirit of the irmament and of the Ether, upon the Earth and under the Earth, on dry land and in the Water, of Whirling Air and of Rushing Fire, and every spell and scourge of God may be made obedient unto me.'

The ritual continues with rising fervour, he magician concentrating all his resources of will and imagination, until the angel tself is felt to be present. In a passion of ecstasy the magician unites himself with t, and cries out, 'I am He, the Truth.' And he command to 'make all Spirits subject unto me' is spoken again, but as if by the angel itself, for it and the magician are now one.

(See also IMITATIVE MAGIC; INVISIBILITY; MAGIC; MAGICAL PAPYRI; SEX.)

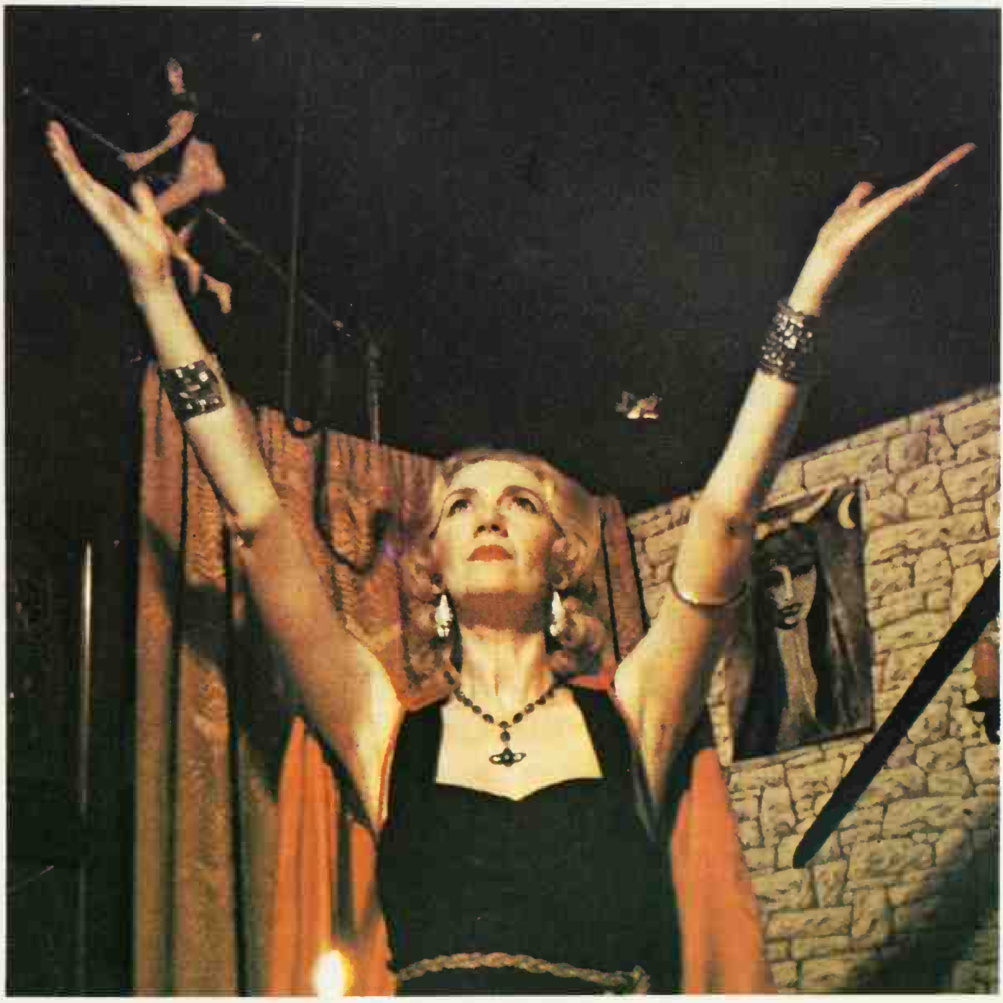
RICHARD CAVENDISH

FURTHER READING: E. M. Butler, *Ritual Magic* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979); R. Cavendish, *The Black Arts* (Capricorn, 1968); I. Regardie, *The Tree of Life* (Llewellyn Publications, 1970). For the grimoires, see Idries Shah, *The Secret Lore of Magic* (Citadel Press, 1970); A. E. Waite, *The Book of Ceremonial Magic* (Citadel Press, 1970).

Magical Obstacle-Race

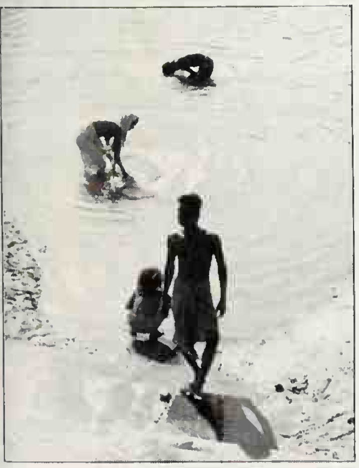
The almost incredible complications and elaborations of these, initial rites and ceremonies . . . read like the worst sort of obstacle-race. They are certainly calculated to deal the death-blow to any notions harboured by intending practitioners that magic is a short cut to their desires. On the contrary it appears here in the light of a severe discipline both on the mystical and the practical side; and those who have ever attended Hindu rites and ceremonies will recognize the similarity of an outlook which transforms all the actions of everyday life into an act of worship. Would-be sorcerers might well pause before embarking on the path traced out for them by 'Solomon'; but could comfort themselves with the reflexion that the results would be in proportion to the effort expended. And when they failed, they would be unlikely to blame their mentor. For they could never be quite sure that they had not deviated at some point or other from his sometimes ambiguous instructions. They could try, try and try again until they died of senile decay without losing hope and without losing faith in 'Solomon'. But both the God-fearing and the graceless must have been in a state of great nervous tension and fatigue when they came at last to the actual rite of conjuration.

E. M. Butler *Ritual Magic*



Martin Weaver

Magicians and witches use 'weapons', robes, instruments, perfumes, jewels, which are believed to be occultly linked to natural forces and which also intoxicate the magicians' mind and heighten his powers



Popperfoto

Rivers

Rivers share in the general symbolism of water as the source of life and, like the Nile in Egypt, may be seen primarily as bringers of fertility: to cross a river is symbolically to pass from one spiritual condition to another; in hymns and spirituals to cross over Jordan is to pass the barrier of death: some rivers, like the Ganges, are regarded as themselves divine.

See GANGES; LANDSCAPE SYMBOLISM; WATER.

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Robes

Ceremonial costume of priests, magicians and specialists in the supernatural; their colours and design frequently have symbolic significance; to put on the robe may be a sign of assuming a frame of mind suitable to the ceremony to be performed.

See COSTUME; RITUAL MAGIC.

The red breast of the robin has led to its being associated with both blood and fire; an old belief of less obvious origin was that the robin would cover a corpse with a pall of moss

ROBIN

THE ROBIN enjoys greater popularity in the British Isles than in any other part of the world. Although it has ancient folklore associations, its fame rests largely on the importance it attained in English prose and poetry a few centuries ago. Every Christmas the robin appears on many Christmas cards and until recently it would have been difficult to find a child who could not answer the nursery rhyme query, 'Who killed Cock Robin?'

The bird owes its popularity to the bright colour of its breast and its confiding behaviour. In most European languages it is called by the equivalent of 'Redbreast' and its folklore owes much to this. Bright-eyed and alert it follows the gardener around, watching for worms and grubs uncovered by his spade, or perches singing on a twig close by.

The first mention of a tame robin is in the biography of the 6th century Scottish saint, Kentigern. His teacher had a pet robin which came daily to perch on his head or shoulder and feed from his hand. According to the legend, mischievous boys handled it so roughly that it died, but St Kentigern restored it to life. The biography was not written until the 12th century but used a much earlier source. St Kentigern's robin is depicted in the coat of arms of the City of Glasgow. Rather more than a century after this saint's biography appeared, the biographer of St Francis of Assisi, the most famous saint associated with compassion for animals, related how he fed and tamed a pair of robins and their brood which came to the brethren's table at mealtimes. In Italy, where robins have long been persecuted, such tameness could be regarded as almost miraculous.

The robin's red breast inspired associations with fire and blood. According to a Welsh legend, the robin flies to a land of woe and fire with a drop of water and tries to quench the flames, but gets its feathers scorched so that it is called Bronrhuddyn, 'scorched breast'. When it returns it feels the cold more than other birds and should be given crumbs. In France, where it is said that the wren fetched fire from heaven, the robin went too close to it when its feathers were in flames and so its own breast was singed. What appears to be a degraded version of these stories is told in Guernsey. The robin brought fire to the island but scorched its plumage on the way. According to a legend current in the Inner Hebrides, when the Christ child was born the fire in the stable almost went out but the robin fanned the embers into flame, burning its breast feathers. Mary blessed it and when the feathers grew again they were red instead of brown. In western France on Candlemas Day a peculiar ritual was performed. A robin's body was spitted on a hazel twig and set before the fire. As the hazel was a magical tree among the Celts, this hints at some pre-Christian belief. In Germany it was commonly held that the presence of a robin averted lightning.

A Drop of God's Blood

The similarity between the colour of the robin's breast and bloodstains linked the bird with death and religious beliefs. The old Scottish saying that the robin should not be killed because it has a drop of God's blood may be a reminiscence of strange, ancient ideas. According to a Breton legend, while Christ was hanging on the cross a robin plucked a thorn from his crown and in so doing pierced its own breast. As a reward it was given power to enrich one young girl every year.

In the 16th century the robin acquired a reputation for covering dead bodies with moss. It is an inquisitive bird and a person finding a robin near a corpse in a wood could suppose that it was about to perform this kindly office, especially if it held nesting material in its bill. The origin of the Babes in the Wood story is obscure but it may be ascribed to the 16th century, although the complete printed version dates from the late 17th century.

No burial this pretty pair
From any man receives,
Till robin redbreast piously
Did cover them with leaves.

The most famous and beautiful allusion is Shakespeare's. In *Cymbeline*, Arviragus says:

With fairest flowers,
Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave: thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose; nor
The azured harebell, like thy veins; no nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath: the ruddock would,
With charitable bill, – O bill, sore-shaming
Those rich-left heirs that let their fathers lie
Without a monument! – bring thee all this;
Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flowers are none,
To winter-ground they corse.

John Webster in *The White Devil* (c 1612) associated the wren with this ritual:

Call for the robin redbreast and the wren,
Since o'er shady groves they hover,
And with leaves and flowers do cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men.

Thus in the course of time, an incident such as seeing a robin carrying moss for its nest near a corpse became embellished by poets. Possibly, too, observations of robins perching near places where graves were being dug added to the bird's associations with funeral rites. But the tradition of birds taking part in church services goes back beyond the 13th century.

From such antecedents originated what has been styled the best known poem in the language, 'The Death and Burial of Cock Robin':

Who killed Cock Robin?
I said the Sparrow
With my bow and arrow
I killed Cock Robin.

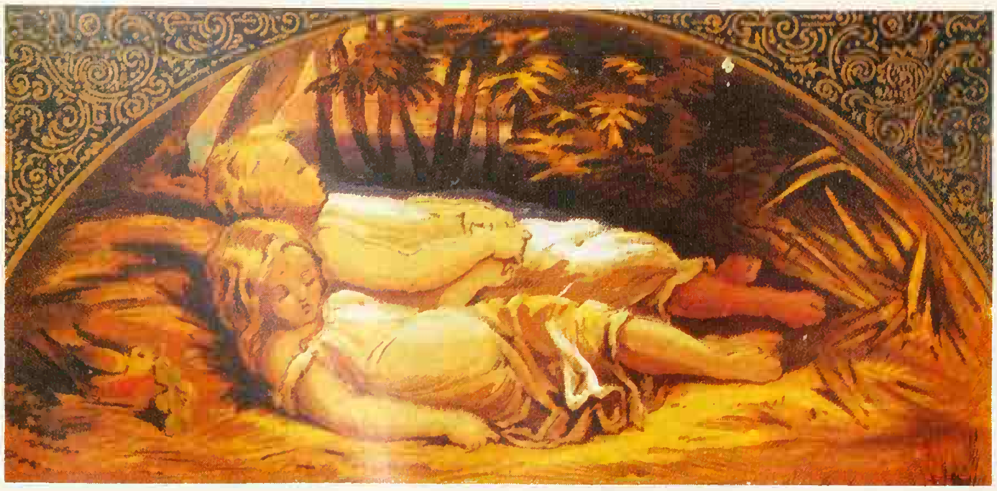
Although the oldest printed example is in an 18th century chapbook, it evidently evolved from earlier ideas. Suggestions that it was originally a political satire or an allusion to the death of Balder are mere speculation. Late in the 18th century it was printed together with another set of verses, 'The Marriage of Cock Robin and Jenny Wren'. In it the birds act various roles:

Then on her finger fair
Cock Robin put the ring.
'You're married now,' says Parson Rook;
While the Lark amen did sing.

It is more likely that the notion of robin and wren being male and female of the same species arose because of associations created by the poets than that countryfolk made this mistake. The belief is not entirely extinct. There was a saying:

The robin redbreast and the wren
Are God Almighty's cock and hen.

Sentiment, religious associations and tradition combined to create friendly feelings for the robin, sometimes resulting in beliefs



Victoria and Albert Museum/Chris Barker

The inquisitive robin acquired a reputation for covering dead bodies with moss and leaves; and in a 17th century version of the Babes in the Wood story the robin is credited with this kindly act

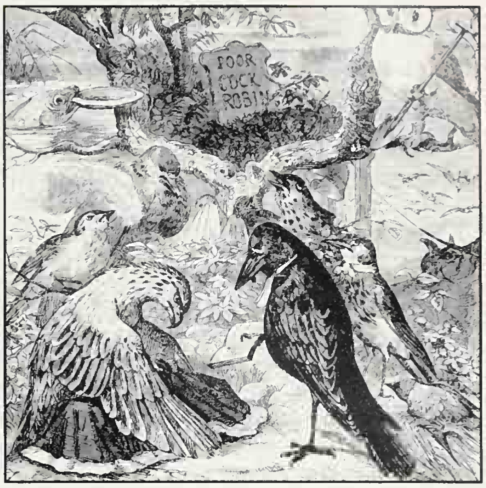
that various ills would befall those who injured it or disturbed the nest. In England, Scotland and Germany it was believed that the cows belonging to a man who killed a robin would yield bloody milk. In Suffolk and Bohemia you would suffer from trembling of your hands if you robbed a nest, and the belief is still current in Wales that a broken limb may be the penalty.

As we might expect, a bird around which so many associations have gathered has been regarded as having oracular powers. There is a Suffolk rhyme:

If the robin sings in the bush,
Then the weather will be coarse;
But if the robin sings on the barn,
Then the weather will be warm.

This may have arisen from the observation that in autumn the bird sings softly, perched fairly low in trees and bushes, whereas when the temperature is rising during the spring and the male is defending his territory he often sings from higher perches. In Germany it is considered a good omen when the bridal pair see a robin on their way from the church. E.A. ARMSTRONG

FURTHER READING: David Lack, *Robin Redbreast* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1950); I. and P. Opie, *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1951).



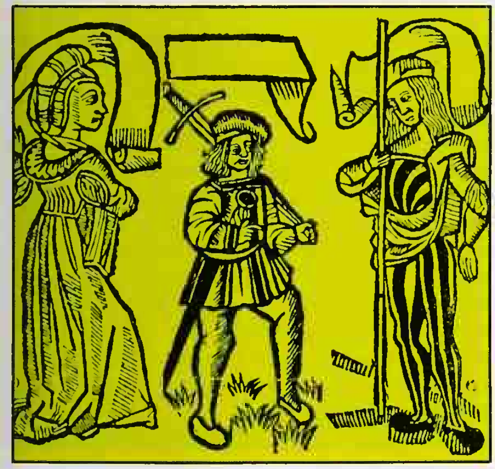
Mary Evans Picture Library

'Who killed Cock Robin?' has been described as the best-known poem in the English language, but its meaning is obscure

Mansell Collection

Robin Goodfellow

Capricious but not always unfriendly hobgoblin, apparently Puck under another name; said to be the child of a fairy king and a mortal woman, and to have the power of changing shape; in origin probably a minor fertility god or spirit.
See PUCK.



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'For he was a good outlaw, and did poor men much good': these words still convey the most familiar image of Robin Hood. the green-clad forest-dweller who stole from the rich to give to the poor: illustration from the *Lytell Geste*, printed by Wynkyn de Worde in the 15th century

ROBIN HOOD

ONE OF THE GREAT folk heroes of England and Scotland since at least as early as the 14th century, Robin Hood is still a living part of British tradition today. The first certain reference to him in English literature is that made by William Langland in his new version of *The Vision of Piers Plowman* (1377), where he makes a drunken chaplain say:

'I can not my pater noster, as the prest hit saith,
But I can rymes of Robyn Hoode and Randle
Erle of Chester.'

We do not know what these 'rymes' were, for they have not survived; the oldest existing ballad is the *Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode and his Meiny*, which was printed by Wynkyn de Worde at the end of the 15th century. It consists of four ballads of apparently much earlier date that have been strung together to make a continuous tale, and it may be that some, or parts, of these would have been known to Langland's chaplain. In any case, it is evident that by 1377 the hero's fame was already widespread, and in the years that followed it was to travel all over Britain in song and ballad, folkplay, chronicle and traditional tale.

Most people even now are more familiar with Robin Hood's legends than they are with those of any other British folk hero, except perhaps Arthur. He is still an admired figure in our traditional landscape, the 'proud outlaw' who became a symbol of freedom and independence and resistance to petty tyranny. Yet, in actual fact, we know very little about him. We do not know where he was born, or in what precise period he flourished. Some early accounts place him in the reigns of Richard I and John, and others in the time of Edward II. He is usually said to have been a yeoman, and quite probably he was, but, from the 16th century onwards, tradition has tended to ennoble him by making him a possible claimant to the earldom of Huntingdon. The causes of his outlawry are likewise unsure, varying in different sources from debts incurred in a wild youth to taking part in the rebellion of Simon de Montfort or Thomas of Lancaster.

We cannot even be certain that he ever existed at all. Some scholars believe that he did not, and that he was, as Professor F. C. Child calls him, 'the pure creation of the ballad muse'. In other words he was an ideal and not a historical figure, invented by the ballad-makers as an expression of the discontents and grievances of the medieval peasantry.

Others think that he rightly belongs to the world of pagan or fairy belief, and that he and his green-clad followers were originally forest elves whose half-forgotten legend was later rationalized into tales of human outlawry. He has been associated with the Norse god, Hoder, with Robin Goodfellow (see PUCK) and with the horned god of the witches who had many names, one of which was Robin. A more mundane theory suggests that 'Robin Hood', a corruption of 'Robin of the Wood', was once a generic title for forest thieves, and that the stories we know may have grown from vague memories, not of a single heroic individual, but of several medieval bandits so nicknamed, whose real names and histories are now quite unknown.

On the other hand, some modern students of the legend believe it to be founded upon fact, and certainly, during many centuries, no one doubted that Robin Hood was a real person. He was essentially a hero of the people, though he never led them in any uprising or fought in any popular cause. He was the constant friend of the poor and oppressed, generous and open-handed in times of need, and quick to avenge the wrongs of the lowly. Because he was an outlaw, he was always in danger, but quick wits, daring and the loyalty of his friends enabled him to reach old age in the end.

He lived by theft, robbing the rich of their gold and the king of his forest game, and he led a merry and adventurous life in the greenwood as the acknowledged leader of a company of likeminded bandits. His chief enemies were those whom the poor also regarded as their enemies – the sheriffs who enforced harsh and detested laws, the forest rangers, the too-wealthy churchmen, the officers of the great land-owning monasteries and others of the same kind. For all these he had a deadly hatred, and he attacked and robbed them without mercy whenever he had a chance.

Tricking the Rich

Tradition and ballad alike insist that he shared the fruits of his robberies with the humbler folk living near his haunts, and probably he did, since they were his natural allies, and there were many ways in which they could help him in their turn. The *Lytell Geste* says that when he drew up rules for the members of his band, he forbade them ever to harm any poor person, be he husbandman or yeoman, squire or knight. Only the rich and powerful needed to fear him, though with them he could be as brutal and violent as any other thief. He delighted also in tricking them and making them look ridiculous, and doubtless this endeared him still further to those who had suffered under their tyranny. All the ballads stress his merrymindedness, his impish sense of humour, his personal piety, which was quite unaffected by his hatred of the greater clergy, and his marvellous skill as an archer. The last words in the *Lytell Geste* are, 'For he was a good outlawe and dyd pore men moch good'; and this is the picture that has survived in most men's minds from the time these words were written until now. Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire both claim him as their own. Among the Sloane manuscripts there is an anonymous life of Robin Hood, apparently written in the late 16th century, which says he was born about 1160 'in Lockesley in Yorkshire, or after others, in Nottinghamshire'. There is a legend, however, that connects him with Loxley in Staffordshire, according to which his father held land there. Joseph Hunter in his *Great Hero of the Ancient Minstrelsy of England* (1852), says he was a Wakefield man, born at the end of the 13th century, who took part in Thomas of Lancaster's rebellion against Edward II in 1322, and was outlawed in consequence. The Wakefield Court Rolls show that a certain Robert Hood and his wife acquired a tenement on Bickhill in 1316, for the purpose of building a house, and that by 1358 they no longer held it. In the Contrarients' Roll – the list of properties confiscated after the failure of the rebellion – 'a building of new construction on Bickhill' is mentioned and it has been suggested that these two tenements were the same. If this is so, there can be little doubt that Robert Hood of Wakefield was involved in the rising and suffered for it. Whether he can also be identified with the Robin Hood that we know is, perhaps, still a matter of some uncertainty.

Wherever his actual birthplace may have been, it seems evident that Robin was of North Country or north Midland stock. His traditional haunts were the two great forests of Sherwood in Nottinghamshire and Barnsdale in Yorkshire, and to a lesser extent Plumpton Park in Cumberland. In Yorkshire, also, he had a second territory on the coast. 'He had,' said Dr Fuller in *Worthies of England* (1662), 'another haunt (he is no fox that hath but one hole), near the sea in the North-riding of Yorkshire where Robin Hoods bay still retaineth his name; not that he was any pirat, but a land-thief, who retreated to these unsuspected parts for his security'. Here he is said to have kept boats in which he could put to sea in times of special danger.

What remains of Sherwood Forest is still starred with place names that recall his many adventures there. The Sheriff of Nottingham ranked with rich clerics among his main enemies; when he instructed his followers not to harm poor people, he added:

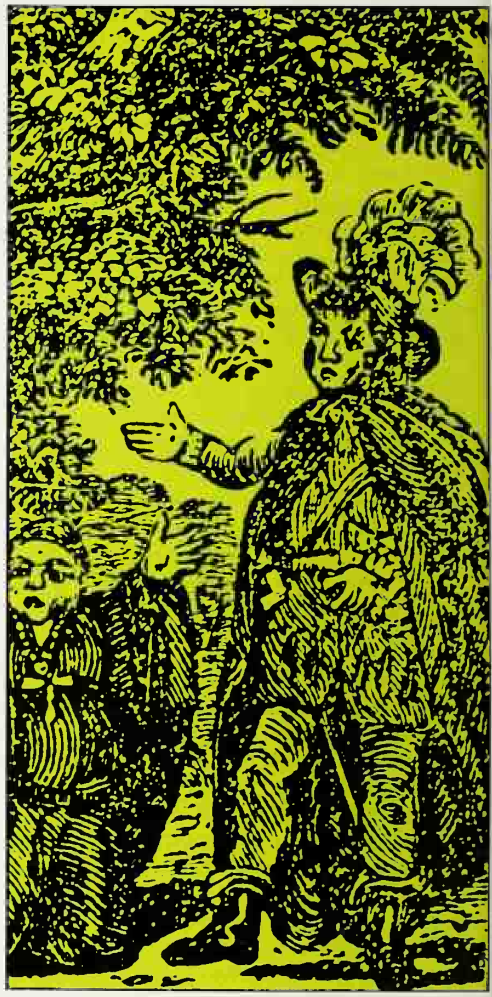
> These bishoppes and these archebishoppes,
> Ye shall them bete and binde:
> The hye Sheriff of Nottingham,
> Hym holde in your mynde.

Hold him in mind they did. The ballads are full of bitter fights between the outlaw and the official, sometimes to the death. In one, Robin shoots the Sheriff and then cuts off his head, in another he hangs him upon his own gallows. Generally, however, the tales of their warfare have a less violent ending, but the Sheriff is nearly always the loser, as, in the minds of the ballad-makers, he deserved to be because he represented laws deemed to be cruel and unjust.

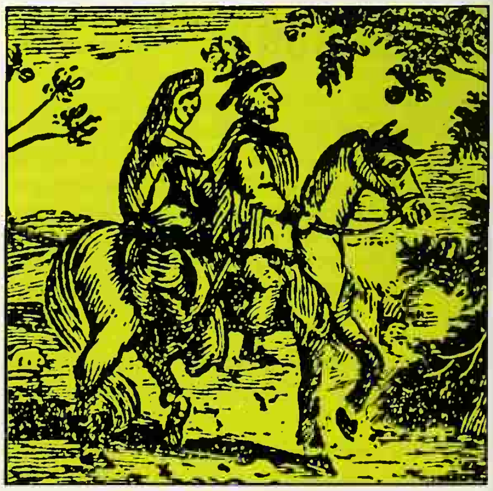
Meeting With a King

In the *Lytell Geste* it is related that, at one point in his career, Robin was persuaded to abandon his wild life, and enter the service of 'Edwarde our comly kynge'. The ballad does not make it clear which King Edward this was, but there are some outside indications that it may have been Edward II. The tale runs that the King came north, and was so enraged by the havoc wrought in his forests by the outlaws that he called for the immediate capture and execution of their leader.

When all attempts to carry out this order had failed, he went himself to the greenwood disguised as an abbot. There he encountered Robin, who was at first deceived by his disguise, but afterwards recognized the supposed abbot as his sovereign lord. As soon as he had done so, he fell on his knees and asked for mercy, 'of thy goodnesse and thy grace, for my men and me'. Edward was so impressed by his loyalty that he pardoned all the band, and took Robin himself into his service. History



Illustrations from *The History of Robin Hood*, c 1840 *Above* Frontispiece with Robin Hood in cloak and plumed hat *Below* Robin sets off on horseback, his mother behind him, to visit his uncle *Top right* He meets a butcher on his way to Nottingham Fair, buys his mare, panniers and a set of clothes, and sells meat so cheaply at the fair that he outsells all the other butchers *Above right* Robin fools the Bishop of Hereford, who seizes an old woman with whom Robin has exchanged clothes *Right* Little John finds a hoard of gold sewn into some clothes during a fight with beggars *Below right* Robin stops King Richard and his men disguised as monks, and demands money; the king reveals his true identity when Robin makes clear his support of the monarchy with the words: 'God save him, and confound his enemies'



records that Edward II did go north in 1323, and that an inquisition concerning thefts of venison since Thomas of Lancaster's rebellion was held at Pickering in the August of that year. Robin Hood's name is not included in the list of culprits, but in the royal accounts for 1324 entries of payments to a valet of the King's Chamber called Robert or Robin Hood occur between April and November, and then cease.

We hear no more of this Robert Hood in any historical document. The ballad, however, goes on to say that, after a time spent in the King's service, Robin wearied of court life and yearned for the greenwood. He asked Edward's permission to return briefly to Barnsdale, and was granted leave for seven days only. He was never seen at court again. Once back in the forest, he reverted to his old ways, gathered his scattered band round him, and for 22 years thereafter enjoyed again the free and dangerous life that he loved.

Death of a Hero

He died at last through the treachery of the Prioress of Kirklees. He fell ill, and because she was noted for her medical skill and was also his kinswoman, he went to her, as the Sloane manuscript records, 'to be eased of his payne by letting of blood'. She betrayed him, very horribly, by letting him bleed to death. She is variously said to have done this in order to avenge the many churchmen he had injured in the past, or because she was persuaded to do so by Sir Roger de Doncaster, who was her paramour. Another version of the tale says it was not she who committed the actual murder, but an unnamed monk who was called in to attend the outlaw, and who may, perhaps, have acted without her knowledge.

However that may be, Robin died slowly and painfully from loss of blood. According to one account of the tragedy, he was locked in the room where the operation had been performed, and 'there did he bleed all the live-long day until the next day at noon'. When his strength was nearly gone, he managed to sound his horn, though only feebly, to summon Little John, his friend and lieutenant, who was waiting in the nearby woods. The latter, finding his master beyond help and dying, demanded the right to avenge him by burning down the priory, but was sternly forbidden to take any action against the Prioress or her nuns. 'I never hurt fair maid in all my time,' said Robin, 'nor at the end shall it be.' Then he asked for his bow, and with a last burst of energy, he shot an arrow through the window, saying that where it fell, there must he be buried.

Long tradition has placed Robin Hood's grave within bowshot of the nunnery, under an inscribed stone which, according to Grafton's *Chronicle* (1562), was laid there by the Prioress herself. The antiquary John Leland mentioned it in Henry VIII's reign, and two centuries later Thoresby recorded, in 1715, that 'near Kirklees monastery, the noted Robin Hood lies buried under a gravestone that yet remains in the park, but the inscription scarce legible'. No other site for the grave has ever been suggested, although Gough, in his *Sepulchral Monuments*, says it was excavated in the early 18th century and was found to be empty. Little John, on the other hand, has had no less than three traditional burial-places – one, rather improbably, in Ireland, another at Pette in Morayshire and a third at Hathersage in Derbyshire, to which village he is said to have retired after the death of his leader.

Celebrating his Memory

Long after these heroes, and all their merry companions, had vanished from this world, they lived on in the Robin Hood plays and games celebrated at Whitsuntide, or on May Day. At what precise period these 'sportes of Robyn Hood' were absorbed into the far older May games we do not know, but medieval records and churchwardens' accounts show that they were flourishing in the 15th and 16th centuries, not only in Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, but in places far removed from the outlaws' traditional haunts. Sir John Paston, in 1473, refers to plays acted in his Norfolk home.

The same plays and sports, and the money gained thereby for church and parish, are mentioned in the churchwardens' accounts of Aberdeen and Edinburgh, Kingston-upon-Thames and Reading, Croscombe in Somerset, and even as far south as Stratton in Cornwall. In their heyday they were so popular that nothing was allowed to interfere with them. They were forbidden by Scottish law in 1555, but they still went on, and an attempt to stop one performance ended in a riot.

Bishop Latimer complained bitterly in a sermon preached in 1549 that, coming once to a parish where he intended to preach, he found the church locked and everyone absent except one man, who said: 'Sir, this is a busy day with us, we cannot hear you, it is Robin Hood's day. The parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood. I pray you, let them not.' And so, in great anger, he was obliged to ride away with his message unspoken.

One final word must be said about Maid Marian, if only because most people today think of her as an integral part of the Robin Hood legend. In fact, she is a late-comer to the tradition. The earlier ballads do not mention her at all, and her first appearance as the hero's true love is in a play written in 1601, *The Downfall of Robert, Erle of Huntingdon*. She seems to have been borrowed from a French pastoral drama in which a shepherd and a shepherdess named Robin and Marian are the principal characters. Regrettable though it may be to the romantically minded, all the evidence goes to show that, whether Robin Hood and his fellows were real people or not, the Maid Marian of modern tradition was not one of their company.

CHRISTINA HOLE

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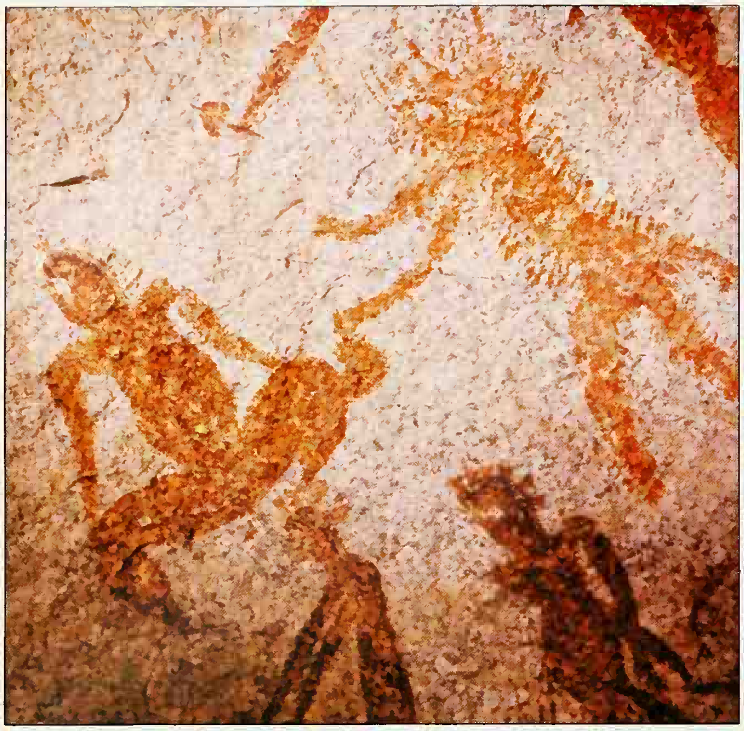

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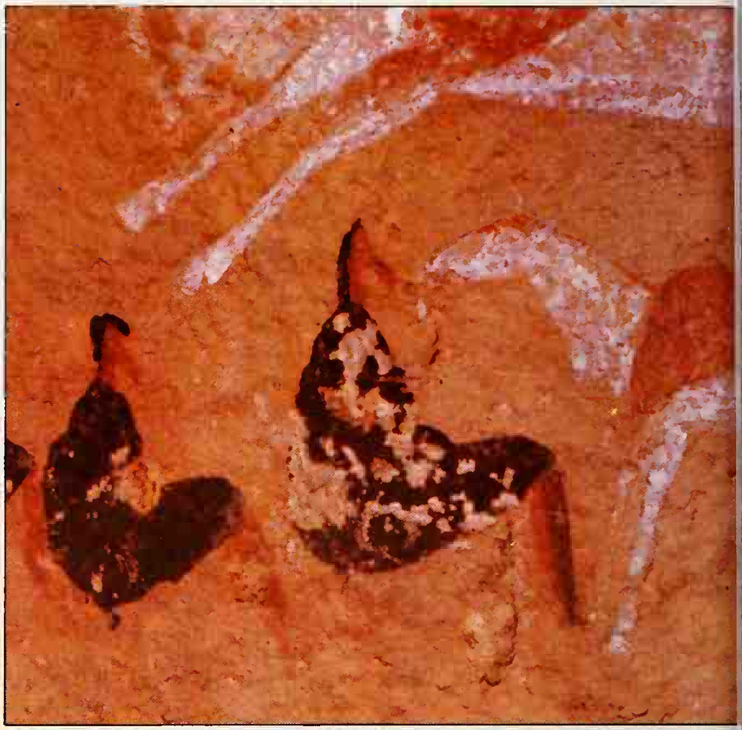
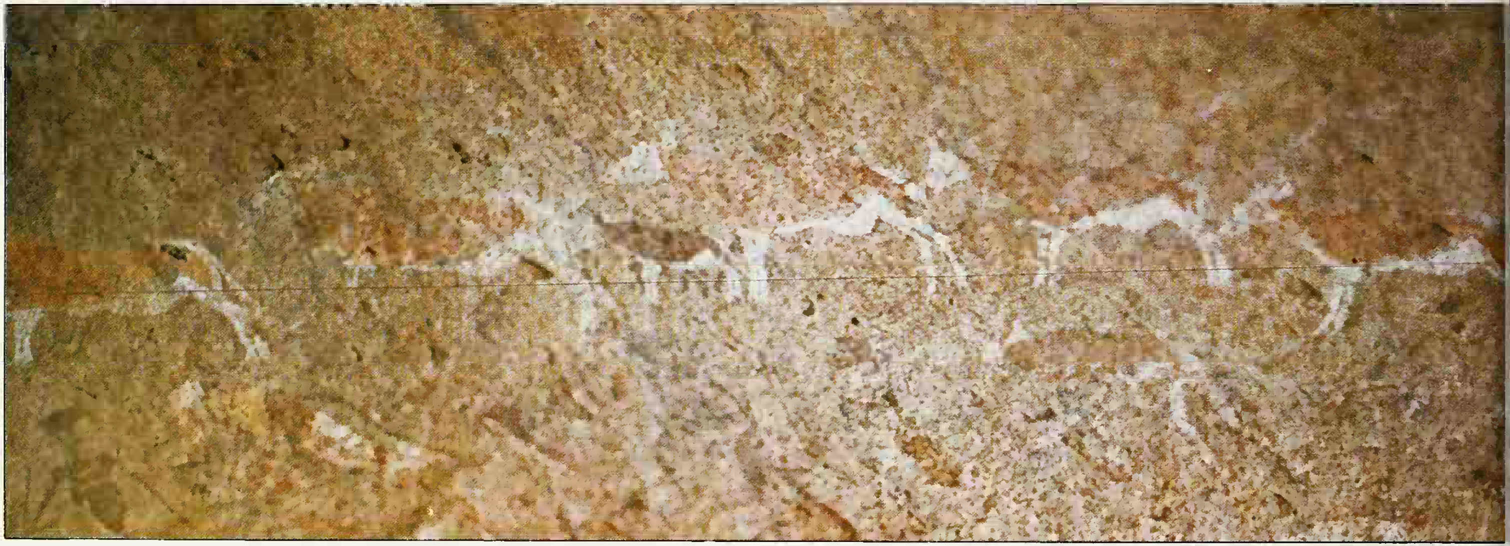
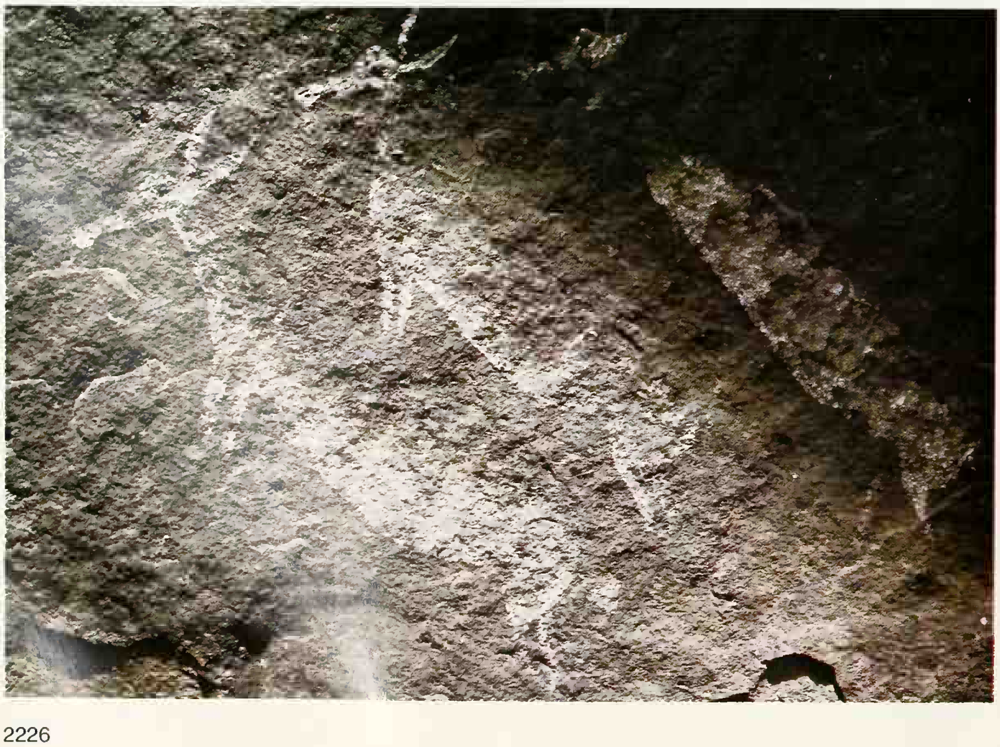






Gerald Cubitt

Scholars are still inquiring into the function and nature of African rock art, an intriguing aspect of primitive culture that stretches back some 15,000 years. Many of these paintings illustrate scenes from everyday life, perhaps serving as one of primitive man's means o communication, in much the same way tha a newspaper serves its readers today, while others seem to involve ritual and magic *Top left* Rock painting from Mashonaland, South Africa, depicting participants in a ritual, possibly a circumcision ceremony; the witch-docto appears to be wearing a lion-headed mask *Top right* Seated figures wearing cloaks and masks: from Grootvlei, Orange Free State *Above* Detail of a rock painting from the Brand berg Mountains, South-West Africa, showing seven small buck *Left* Bushman painting from Natal, South Africa

ROCK PAINTINGS (Africa)

ROCK ART IS FOUND in almost every country; it comprises petroglyphs (carvings in the rock face), engravings and pictographs (applied pigments). Australia is perhaps pre-eminent in the sheer number of its sites: not only does it have the oldest petroglyphs – more than 40,000 years old – but aborigines in some areas still produce pictographs, the longest art tradition in the world.

In Africa, most of the rock art is as yet undated, but some of it probably goes back as far as any, as evidenced by some small stone slabs from a cave in Namibia, painted with animals, which date from between 25,500 and 17,000 BC.

This art is mainly located in Morocco and Algeria, the Fezzan province of Libya, the Upper Niles, the Hoggar and Air Mountains of the Central Sahara, East Africa and throughout South Africa. And wherever we find these pictures, they have one thing in common: they portray a world in which animals were the most important thing in life. They were so important that the artists seem to have been able to draw them instinctively, often in a style which has seldom been surpassed, even by the great masters of painting. Yet these prehistoric drawings were either scratched with flints on the sides of cliffs, or painted with crude brushes and pigments on the walls of the rock shelters where man made his home.

The best and most representative of these drawings are found in the mountains of the Sahara and the deserts of South Africa. The former were executed by an unknown race of hunters; the latter by Bushmen. The story they tell begins with the depiction on the rock faces of the big game they hunted — elephants, lions, giraffe, wild sheep, boar and even aquatic animals like hippopotamuses. They prove that the Sahara, in late pre-history, must have been forested and watered by rivers which have since dried up or gone underground.

It is, of course, exceedingly difficult for modern man to see the world with the eyes of his primitive ancestors. We can only look at the drawings and marvel at the meticulous attention to detail. When the artist engraved an elephant on a rock face, for instance, he emphasized the small, shrewd eyes, the huge, flapping ears, the sinuous trunk and the massive feet. The larger and fiercer animals are invariably the most realistically drawn, as if they presented the greatest threat to the hunter armed with his stone axe or tiny bow. The hippopotamuses, giraffes, lions and panthers are all caught in characteristic attitudes, lumbering along, or towering above us, or poised ready to spring. It is significant that where man himself is portrayed, he is shown as a small, crouching figure armed with throwing-stick, axe or bow, and, in one picture, dead at the feet of an elephant.

In recent years a more complex interpretation of some southern African rock art has been advanced, based upon some hitherto neglected Bushman testimony, meticulously transcribed into thousands of pages in the 1870s. These documents provide verbatim accounts of Bushman life, rituals and beliefs, which support the interpretation of some rock art as being essentially religious and linked to the trance experiences of shamans (see shaman). The theory may explain many of the more bizarre aspects in the art, such as therianthropes (figures combining human and animal characteristics), extra limbs, bleeding noses, etc.

Scholastic Guesswork

The deep significance of prehistoric art, both that found in the European caves and that on the African cliff sites, was at first dismissed by scholars on the grounds that 'cavemen' were incapable of that degree of cultural awareness required to produce works of such a high aesthetic order. Then, later, when it was accepted that these extraordinary pictures were drawn by Stone Age men, a new school of experts began to interpret them by the psychological and moral standards of the 20th century. One result has been that the more prudish observers have condemned as obscene those pictures in which sex is represented either realistically or symbolically, while others have attempted to explain them by references to fertility rites and ritual magic.

An example of this subjective interpretation of African rock art will show the degree of guesswork that still characterizes this field of scholarship: a rock drawing found in the Tassili-n-Ajjer in southeastern Algeria depicts a scene containing a total of 11 figures, some of them with enormous headpieces like a sultan's turban. The Abbé Breuil, regarded as the greatest authority on prehistoric art, explained this picture as follows: 'Scene of circumcision composed of eleven persons: on the left, two operators and the one to be operated upon; in the middle, with legs crossed and beating time with their arms, singers ordered to drown out the cries of the victim; and on the right, members of the family turning their back on the scene.'

Yet if one examines the picture oneself, one must admit that other interpretations are equally convincing. For instance, if the turbans represent Arabs, and the shock of crinkly hair over black faces represents captive Negroes, the gestures, knives and other details might depict a castration scene, particularly as there were places along the slave routes from Central Africa to the Mediterranean coast where black captives were emasculated before being sold for service in the harems. Or again, is what we see a quarrel between three men with a number of spectators arguing and gesticulating on the side lines? The honest answer is that we do not know. We can only guess.

We can only guess because the farther we get away in time from early man, the less we can understand his myths or his magic, his view of the world. One of the most famous rock paintings found in the Sahara was discovered by the French explorer Henri Lhote, again in the Tassili-n-Ajjer. Lhote called his discovery 'The Great God with Praying Women', and anthropologists assumed, on the basis of Lhote's interpretation, that such a picture proved that the primitive men who painted it worshipped a god or gods as we do. But what do we see if we regard this picture without preconceived theories of its religious or magical significance? The 'Great God' himself obviously has a symbolically exaggerated organ hanging down between his legs, together with what appear to be bulging muscles on his shoulders, presumably indicative of immense virility, while the surrounding women are depicted with grossly enlarged sex characteristics. The question therefore is, does this scene represent a religious ceremony or a fertility rite? Or is it simply primitive man's dream of sexual indulgence?

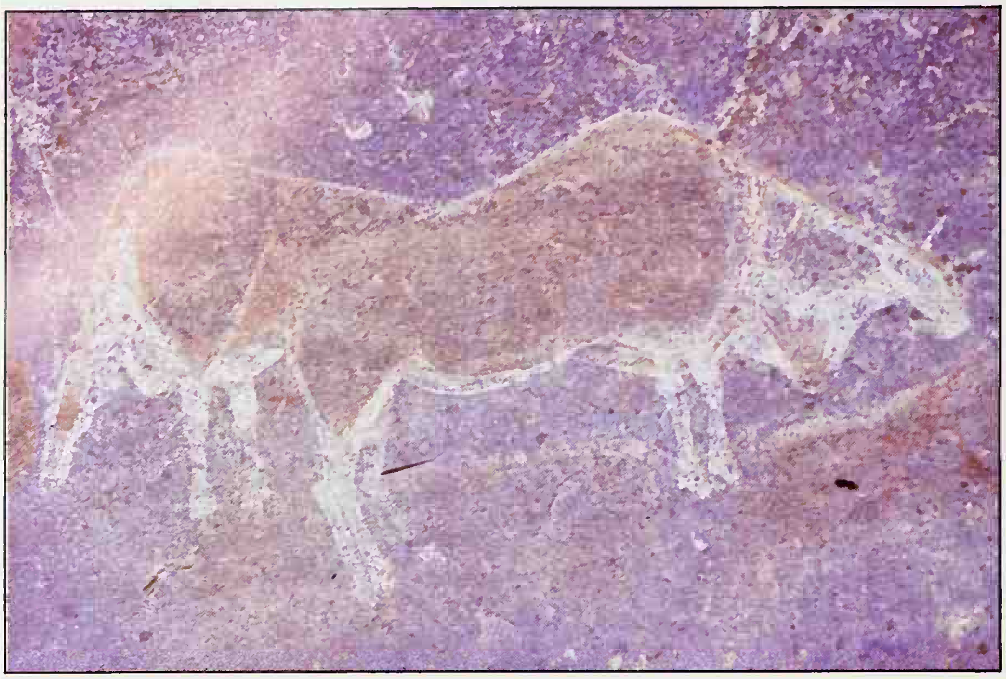
So there are two approaches and two theories about the meaning of prehistoric African art. The first, which has long been in favour with the academics, is that these pictures have a much deeper significance than they reveal to the modern observer, that the artists were also shamans, or medicine men, who drew pictures of game for increase, and to ensure good omens for the hunt and the success of the hunters. The many rock drawings which openly depict the act of sexual intercourse are put down to fertility ritual.

A second theory, which is gaining ground among the younger school of anthropologists, is that what we see in the great art galleries of Africa are scenes and portraits drawn primarily for aesthetic and recreational motives – to give pleasure to the artists and their viewers. This theory is based on the argument that there are too many drawings of too many animals and too many purely domestic activities to interpret all of them as religio-magical. In fact, even the Abbé Breuil claimed that a great many of the African drawings are comic both in execution and effect, provoking, he says, a gentle laugh in the manner of caricatures. So the humour of the African paintings is expressed in the slightly exaggerated figures of men and animals, a form of comic art familiar to us in Aesop's fables. Perhaps, then, we should not over-solemnize the function or meaning of these pictures, any more than we should the unsophisticated 'primitives' of children, or of those adults who paint with a childlike vision.

Pictorial 'Newspapers'

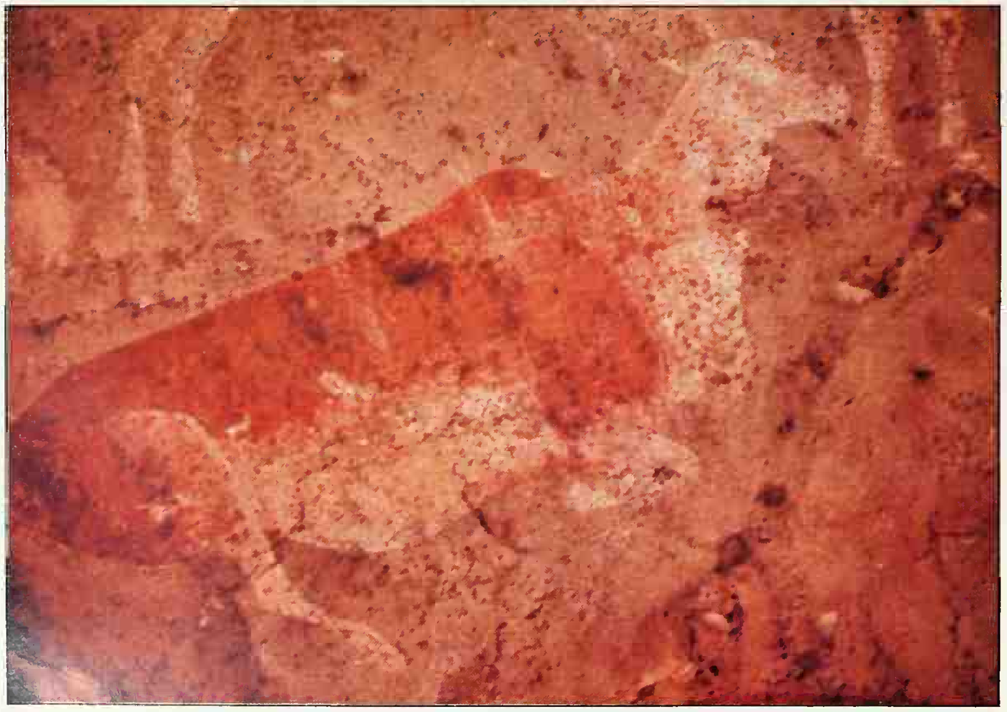
The more modern view of prehistoric African art presupposes that our ancestors were not the 'cavemen' of popular tradition – big hairy creatures who fought with clubs and dragged their women off to rock shelters. Rather, they needed, just as we do, the compensations of a social and intellectual life in addition to food and shelter. They enjoyed, no doubt, the pleasures of storytelling, which some excelled in verbally, others pictorially. The hundreds of thousands of rock pictures all over Africa suggest that the rock faces of the cliffs and the walls of the shelters served as 'newspapers' to their prehistoric 'readers'. In short, the majority of the pictures seem to be straightforward illustrations of daily life, hence the impression that they were primitive man's principal means of communication.

Unfortunately, there has also been a tendency for scholars to read into rock art what they wanted to see. One of the foremost



H. C. Woodhouse

Animals appear constantly in African rock art, perhaps as magic for their increase or as an aid to hunters *Above* A group of eland: rock painting from Orange Free State *Below* Eland reclining, from Lesotho *Right* Two rhebok from Cape Province



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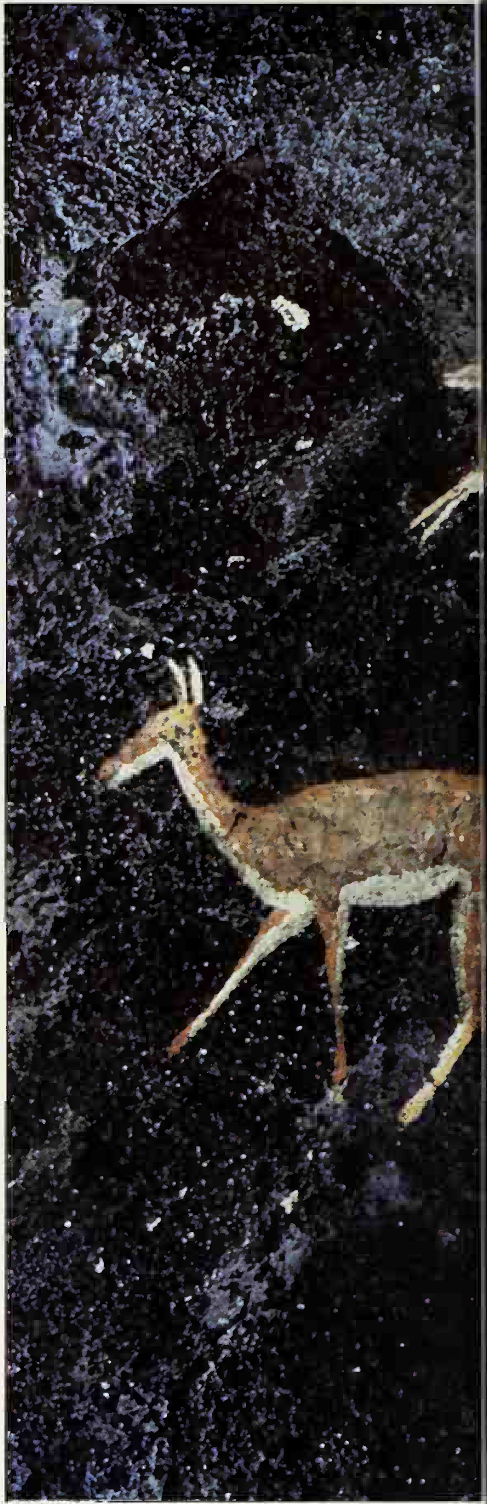
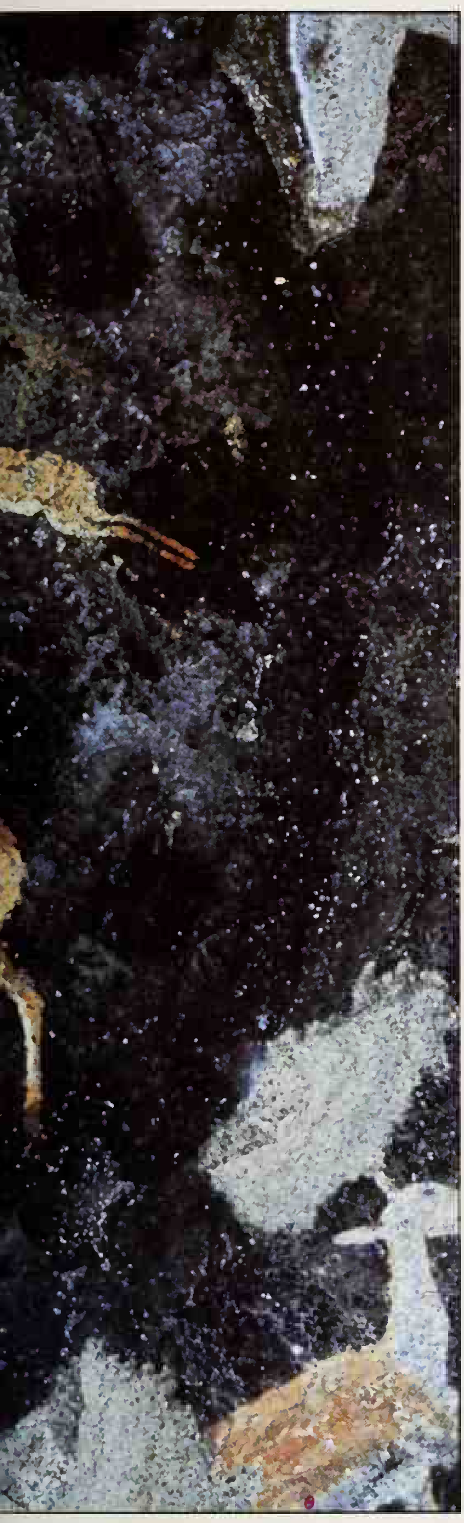


blunders was perpetrated by Breuil, who created the legend of the 'White Lady of the Brandberg'. This painting is part of a panel of human and animal figures discovered by a German prospector in the Brandberg mountains of Southwest Africa in 1917. Breuil saw a copy of the painting in 1929, and finally managed to visit the site 18 years later. He declared that the so-called White Lady and her companions represented Caucasian visitors from the Mediterranean: she was perhaps a Cretan bull-dancer of c 1500 BC, and symbolised the Diana-Isis myth.

However, recent research has established beyond doubt, not only that the White Lady is clearly Bushman art, but also that it is a male figure (with a penis) carrying male equipment of a bow and arrow.

But whatever the arguments concerning the significance of the rock drawings, no observer would deny the spiritual attributes of these old artists, if we define as spiritual the recognition of the beauty and terror of the world around. And this recognition is always expressed in primitive cultures in an integral system of myth and magic. In other words, with peoples at this early stage of development their entire existence in all its aspects – economic, social and religious – is dominated by the natural phenomena all around them all the time. To this extent it is true that these old artists did not engrave or paint the rocks in a spirit of 'art for art's sake'. They drew their pictures as an expression of the needs of the community. One such need, obviously, was to convey information, and many of the most vivid of the Saharan drawings are of this kind. Where a people has no written language at all and only a limited vocabulary (the Bushmen and Australian aborigines are living examples) pictures are the only effective way of communicating.

We find drawings all over the Sahara of chariots drawn by four horses at the gallop. These paintings puzzled students of rock art until it was pointed out that the Greek historian Herodotus wrote in the 5th century BC that a Saharan people called the Garamantes 'chased the negroes in four-horse chariots'. Putting the clues together, we can solve the mystery: the men who first saw the chariots of these Garamantes had



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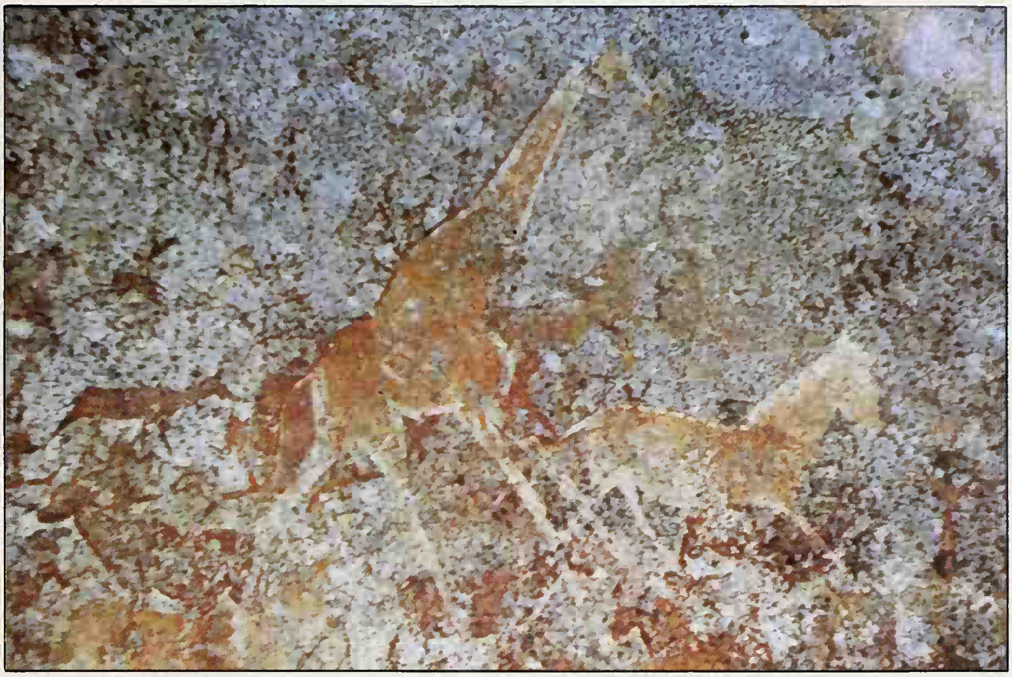
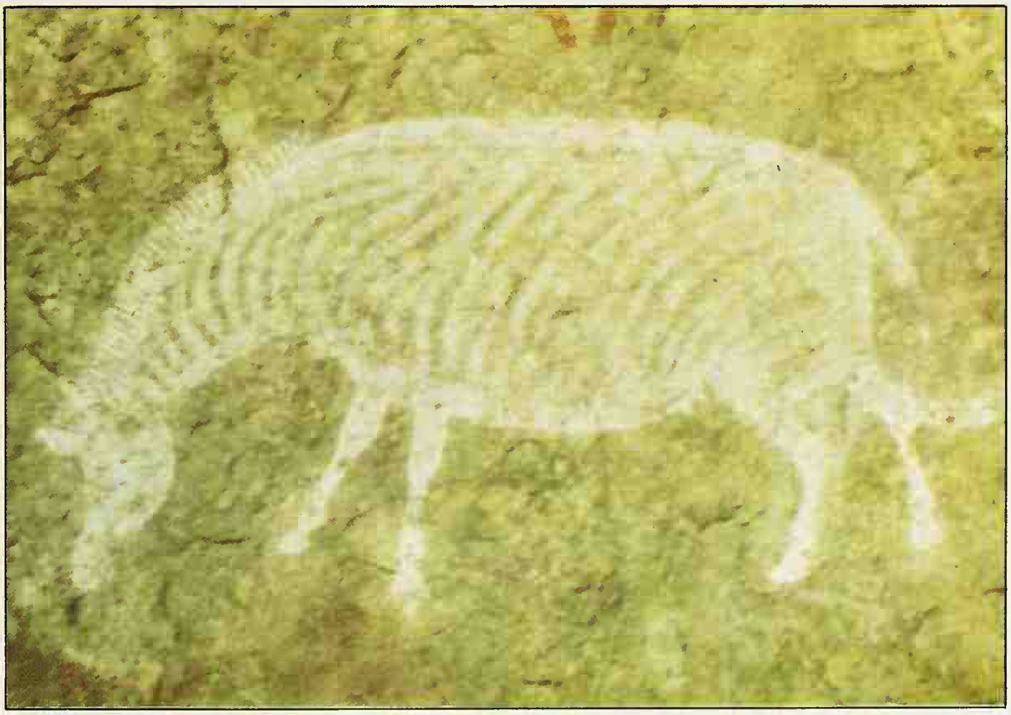


H. C. Woodhouse

These primitive artists drew their pictures as an expression of the needs of the community, to convey information and as relaxation and amusement *Above* Giraffe and quagga, a South African animal related to the ass and zebra *Below* Zebra, from Mashonaland



H. C. Woodhouse

no way of describing such a vehicle except by drawing it.

The vital need to convey information, then, must have been one reason for the rock pictures; the need for relaxation and amusement another. So, in the shelters under overhanging cliffs in the Sahara Desert and on the mountainsides in East and South Africa, families and tribes, once well supplied with food after the day's hunt, had many hours to while away; and what would be more natural than for a man to pick up a nearby flint and to amuse himself and his companions by seeing if he could depict the animal he had stalked and perhaps killed that morning? In fact, judging from the mere size of some of the engravings – a rhinoceros found in a wadi south of the Mourzouk Sand Sea in the Libyan Fezzan measures over 14 feet in length – the artists may have worked as a group. There are, indeed, so many pictures of varying degrees of skill that obviously rock painting was a favourite pastime of prehistoric man, filling his leisure hours, satisfying his need for entertainment, and expressing his emergent religious feelings.

That art was, of course, 'inspired' by a whole body of myths and an unquestioning faith in magic which were characteristic of prehistoric man everywhere in the world. To this extent his pictures were an expression of what we can call his 'religion', for if he drew an animal, the portrait had a deep significance for him which it cannot possibly have for us. This has led some scholars to claim that the art galleries of Africa were holy places, constantly frequented because of their 'magic'. In this sense, they could be compared to the sacred pictures which hang in our churches. But whether we subscribe to this theory or not, we must recognize that their pictures are often great works of art and tell us what the world looked like in the morning of history. JAMES WELLARD*

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ROME

An agrarian religion developed into an imperial religion, which borrowed gods and cults from many peoples, and Romans 'seldom questioned the efficacy of a religion which had grown outward from a bend on an Italian river to embrace the greater part of Europe, North Africa and the Near East'

ROMAN RELIGION has no equal in the ancient Mediterranean although its type of polytheism is shared throughout pre-classical and classical Europe, North Africa and the Near East. Polytheism was never a mode of theology as we understand it today. A formal body of dogma and an organized congregation or network of congregations have no place in a study of Roman paganism. Even the notion of religion remained outside the ancient cognizance.

The Latin word *religio*, whose original definition is obscure, meant 'awe', 'scruple' and also 'superstition', although the Romans sometimes acknowledged the last as a distinct and extreme attitude. One's devotion and sense of obligation to the divine could be expressed by the idea of *pietas*, which was by no means due merely to the gods. It was a bond of obligation which could be felt in accordance with blood-ties, ethnic solidarity or contractual agreement. Whereas pietas and similar notions reflect a personal recognition of a deity's existence, the worship (*cultus*) of a deity manifested itself in sacrifices, gifts and utensils (*sacra*) which shared with other sacrifices, gifts and utensils the common denomination of the *ritus* that was normally designated by its ethnic origin. Hence, such modern expressions as 'Greek rite' have a very long history.

The Roman Rite

Some Roman gods were worshipped in a non-Roman rite. For instance, a sacrifice to Saturn took place in the 'Greek rite'. In this case the Roman officiant did not cover his head with his toga but poured the wine while bare-headed. Normal Roman ceremonial practice dictated a covered head – evidently to avoid ominous sights. Constant flute music was also required – evidently to avoid ominous sounds. The 'Roman rite' of Italy implied a covered head, flute music and other practices which distinguish it from the rites of diverse communities and peoples. Theoretically rites were as numerous as there were clear ethnic divisions. The various rites are an integral part of Roman imperial religion.

Occidental religion tends to concentrate man's attentions upon one deity and to prescribe norms of behaviour that constitute morality, but little in the way of moral precept emerges from pagan religion. Further, a modern focus upon the single deity tends to narrow our attention on the breadth of Roman religion. While the importance, not to say power, of the Roman gods cannot be denied, the role of these gods can never approximate the omnipotence and unity of Western man's one god. Some Roman gods did not even begin as gods but as forces, activities and spheres of influence beyond man's ken and control. The one god acknowledged today has received superhuman attributes, that is attributes which are human though somehow better than human. Creating, knowing, loving and the like can be understood only in human terms. For the Romans a god enjoyed human shape, but religion involved much besides man-like gods. The history of Roman religion exhibits traces of non-gods becoming gods, so that we must admit the possible growth of a notion of deity. However, this growth derived its material from religious forces, powers and entities otherwise outside the nature of the world, if not outside knowledge or fear.

The majority of Roman gods rarely received cult as the simple god. Rather, the gods usually bore an epithet or surname which distinguished them from others whose realm of efficacy differed. Consequently the universality of one pagan god was never possible. From place to place his epithets evinced his peculiarity. The gods of the Romans may conveniently be divided into groups of natural forces and their phenomena, physical activity, single abstract conceptions, deities of a given place and, finally, divinities of unknown origins. Among the gods of Nature stand Jupiter, Mars and Ceres. Jupiter was once the sky and the day. So he might be worshipped as a god of the sky and be called Thunderer or the like after some heavenly appearance. Mars belongs to the forces of springtime, and so his cult was concentrated in March.

Ceres ruled the growth of crops and vegetation in general. Her origin leads naturally to the next group, the type of physical activity. At an earlier stage Ceres was no goddess. *Ceres* or *cerus* was a verbal noun from the root 'to make grow' (*creare*) or 'to grow' (*crescere*). It was Growth itself. By the classical period Ceres had acquired all the attributes of a fertile lady and had narrowed her attentions upon agriculture, with the notable exception of her invocation at a wedding. She was identified with the Greek grain goddess, Demeter, as early as the 5th century. Indeed her oldest Roman temple may have been totally the result of Greek influence. Be that as it may, Ceres in cult and in story rarely exhibits a purely Roman background.

Venus represents the same type of deity. She began as the physical activity of coaxing and luring, but was early assigned a role in keeping watch over vegetable gardens. In some parts of central Italy the same priestess served both Ceres and Venus. A third such deity was Juno, whose name must be related to the word 'youth', a period of animal life which she as a goddess preserved and prolonged. In many instances the Romans forgot the origin of such 'gods'.

These divine types differ in origin very little from the manifest abstraction which never, or only occasionally, assumed a human form that could overwhelm the deity's beginnings to such a degree that a Roman could not understand its principal function. In this category are Tellus, Dis, Fides and Salus. Tellus signifies the earth, which is anything but an abstraction. However, *tellus* was most certainly the state or essence of earth, 'earthness', rather than a natural power such as growth or physical activity such as coaxing. The sole major festival of Tellus was named for the slaughter of pregnant cows, which were cremated so that the bountiful ash might be employed in fertilization. Tellus was enriched and was not in itself a force or deity. However, under Greek influence the 'earth' became a mother goddess.

Dis shows affinities with Tellus and also influence from a Greek quarter. Dis belonged to the underworld. His name means 'rich', which was thought a suitable translation of the Greek Pluto. Whereas Tellus received annual sacrifices, the underworld's Dis received sacrifice every century (*saeculum*) at the splendid and gorgeous Secular Games. Tellus had one Roman temple which had been vowed in wartime on account of an

Cupid, the Roman god of love, identified with the Greek Eros, embraces the mortal Psyche. Roman religion is full of instances of borrowing, and sometimes modifying, the gods and cults of the many peoples within the Empire

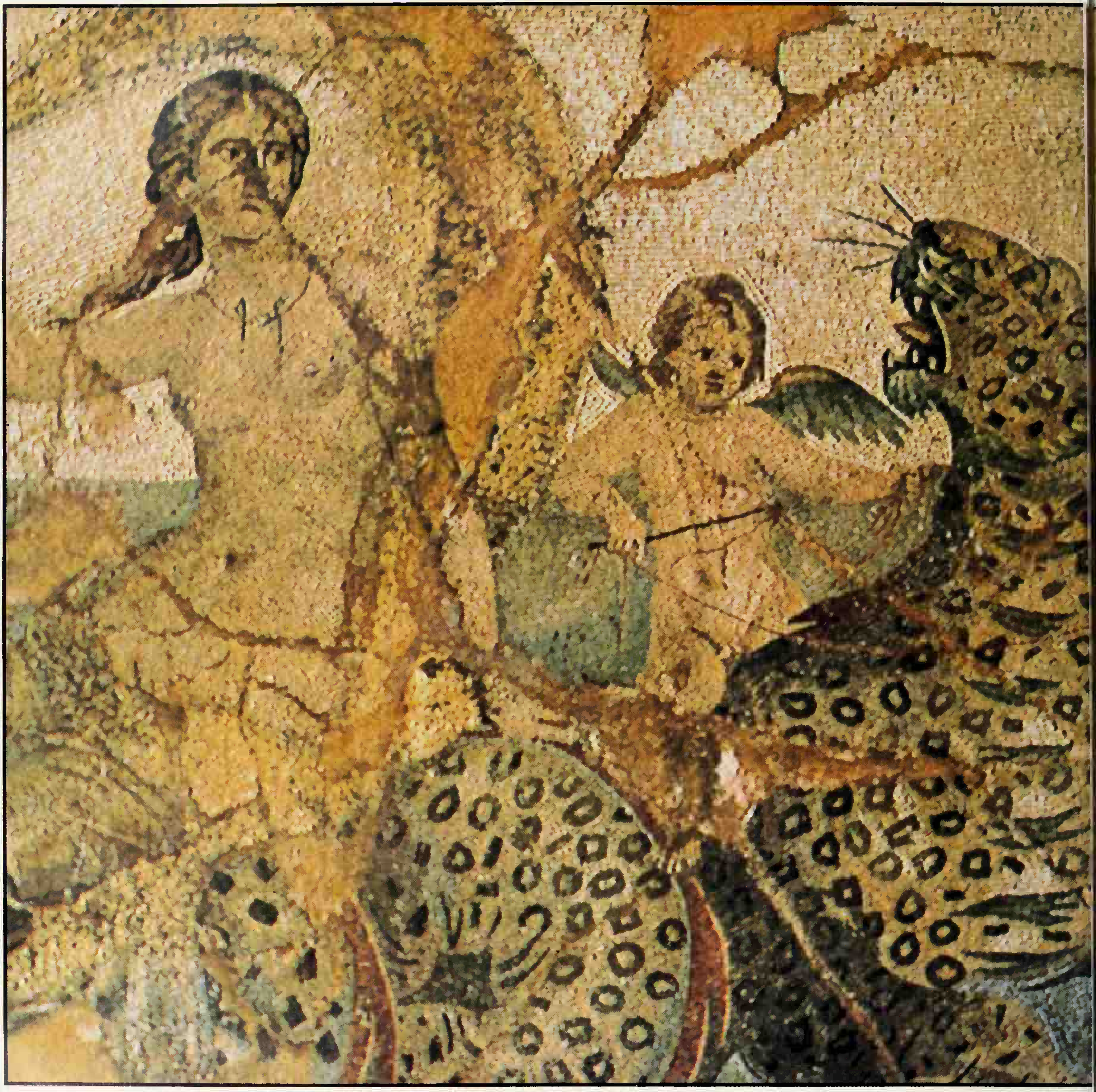
R. Schoder SJ

earthquake. Her old cult was performed in the open away from temples. Dis had the one altar, buried except for a few hours every century. Evidently neither deity was represented by a man-like statue, although the Romans considered one a goddess and the other a god. Tellus remained quite Roman in cult in spite of learned attempts to equate her with the Earth of Greek mythology. Dis, on the other hand, was an integrated foreigner.

The many deities invoked at the Secular Games exhibit a miscellany of Roman, Italic and Greek gods, worshipped by prayers and with utensils emanating from equally diverse quarters. The core of the ritual went back to the middle of the 4th century BC. The Games were controlled by the Fifteen Men (formerly Ten Men) For Sacrificing, a powerful priesthood in charge of imported state cults. The cult of Tellus, however, was carried on by the chief pontiff and the Vestal Virgins, the oldest civil priests of Rome. Yet Tellus, 'Earth', and Dis, 'Rich', share similar beginnings and interest in the soil's goodness.

Of the same type are Fides Publica and Salus. The former, 'the People's Trust', had a very old cult and precinct. The latter, 'Welfare' or 'Safety', received a temple very late although the notion of the people's well-being dominated many areas of the civil religion. Both were acknowledged as gods to the extent that they were given temples, but neither had a human representation and, so far as we know, they were female only because of their grammatical gender. Ceres, Venus, and probably Tellus, originally, had a neuter grammatical gender and became 'feminine' in the process of becoming deities with functions seemingly appropriate to women.

Ops offers herself as an example. The grammatically feminine word means 'abundance', 'resource' and 'provender'. On 25 August she received worship from the Vestal Virgins at the King's House. On 19 December fell her oldest civil festival, which the Romans recognized as a ceremony for a deity generous in the bestowal of natural resources. Hence, she was honoured after the harvest and in the dead of winter. Yet this 'goddess' could not withstand the tendency to anthropomorphism and became in the popular mind the wife of Saturn, for no better reason than the

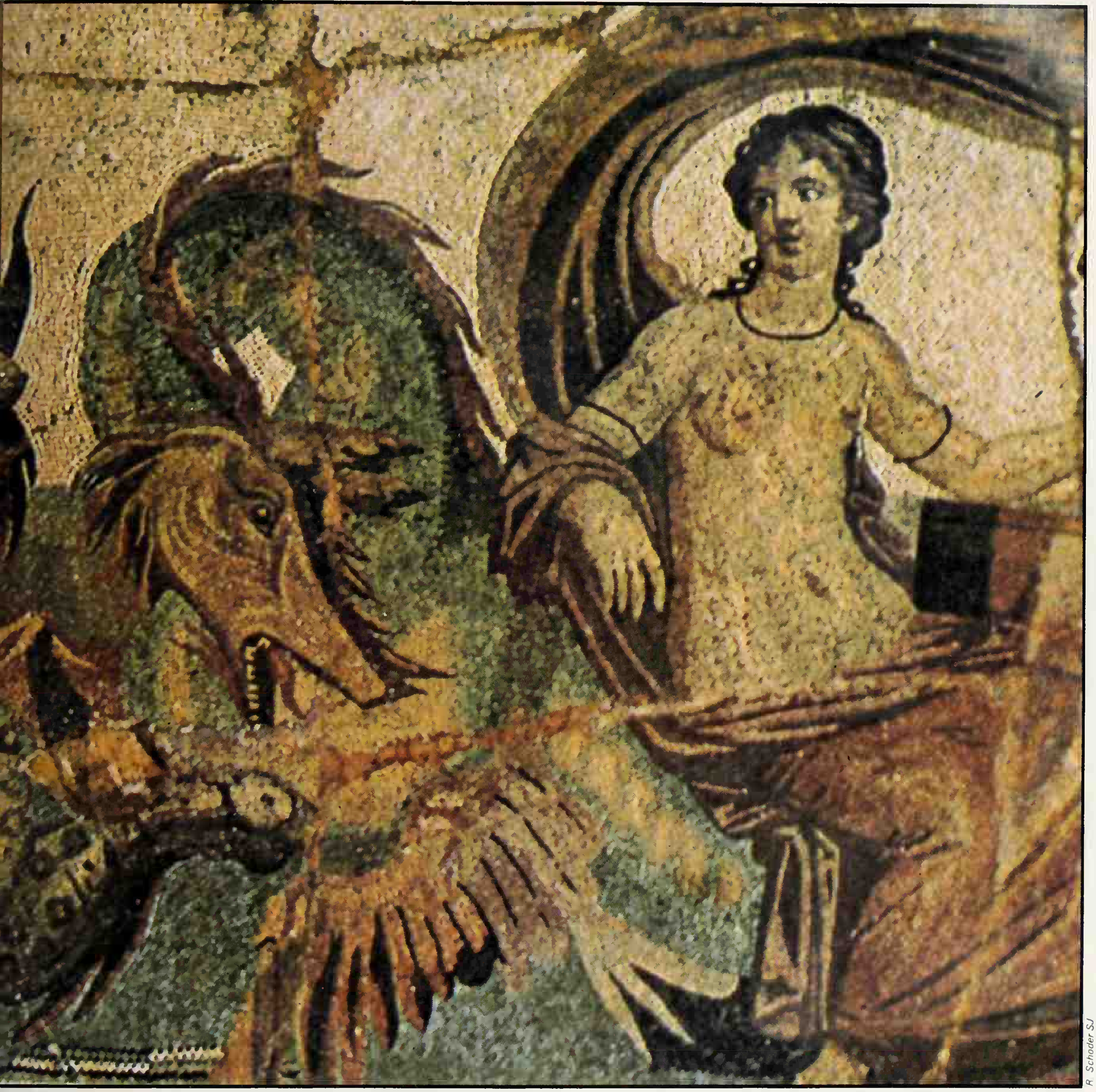


occurrence of his great festival on 17 December, two days before hers. The one temple Ops certainly had was probably not very old. Sacrifice at the King's House suggests that originally the cult was domestic and later raised to a public status.

Many gods and goddesses enjoyed temples, precincts, chapels or altars in Rome. However, such honours did not necessarily imply a conception of a man-like deity. Even statues sometimes did not blur the Romans' understanding of the god's primitive existence as a force or activity. It is frequently urged that Etruscans and Greeks lent the Romans their anthropomorphic conception of the divine. Considerable as this outside influence was, man's instinct to fancying man-like gods still prevails. Very early Romans applied 'Father' and 'Mother' as cult titles. What was akin to the Roman imagination was the myth-creating belief in marriages among gods and their offspring. Most divine marital and filial ties the Romans transferred from Greek to Latin poetry. So far as we can ascertain, the Roman gods passed celibate lives before Greek ideas were introduced.

A very different force is met in the divinity which the Roman community wished to ward off. On 25 April every year a civil priest offered sacrifice to the force of the rust blight, Robigus, which might strike the crops. The rites were held at places five miles from the city, apparently in order to keep the rust from crossing some archaic boundary. More unusual, indeed unique, was the altar dedicated on the edge of the city to Verminus, god of cattle worms. The rearing of this altar by a prominent patrician was prompted by a great plague in 175 BC, which wrought death among the cattle and the men such that corpses were heaped untended in the streets. The Romans explicitly speak of Robigus and the like as 'gods'. However, they clearly never saw them as beneficent deities. They sought their benevolence, and in this context there is much truth to the view of Roman religion as perpetual appeasement of natural forces.

Because the primitive religion, which the Romans conservatively kept, closely adhered to the agricultural economy of its decidedly unintellectual practitioners, most festivals, ceremonies and deities betray and reflect



R. Schoder SJ

In one of the frequent cases of literary borrowing from Greek mythology, the sea nymphs called Nereids are shown with a sea monster on this mosaic from the Roman camp of Lambaesis in Algeria

he lives of tillers and herders, within the ycle of the year. If the well-being of a eople is not reckoned only in its battles, it s reckoned by its material resources. n this context Romans sought a right elation with their gods or, more specifically vith natural forces and activities, in terms f their society. Hence the state religion ook little account of deities of trade and nanufacture, who did indeed exist and in ome later cases thrived apart from the najor civil cults.

A history of Roman religion would need o trace the development of an agrarian eligion into an imperial religion that orrowed and modified gods and cults from nany peoples within its vast empire and pon its fringes. Sometimes old deities changed and added to their own attributes those of other gods with whom they were identified. Sometimes the alien god was introduced with or without a slight Roman veneer. Later stages in Roman religion may reflect merely the Latin outcropping of some Etruscan, Greek or Near Eastern religion. Although inherently interesting and equally Roman phenomena, the borrowings remained just borrowings, unless we are to except Christianity.

Calendar and Cult

The civil calendar retains the oldest stratum of Roman religion. This calendar was an official almanac of religion which the state priests were bound to observe, even though the first serious Roman student of his religion (Varro, in the 1st century BC) tells us how knowledge of some cults had deteriorated till only the name was known. The basic features of the calendar's liturgy roughly parallel the farming year in central Italy. The planting, promotion of growth, harvesting, storing of crops fall at their appropriate moment. February is given over to cleansing and March to decorating as the year ends and begins. December and January betray some signs of festivals of lights, but generally the Romans seldom took their eyes off the ground to gaze at the heavens. They left that task to others when they wanted it done.

Roman cult was rarely ever personal or congregational. Almost all civil sacrifice fell to the priests named for life or to annually elected officials. The priestly class at the top was identical with the ruling class. A priest came from the social elite and rarely felt his religious duties to be in conflict with his political ambitions. An official clergy as we understand it did not develop. This lack does not indicate the absence of priestly expertise. On the contrary, the normal expectation of priesthoods by members of the same clan presupposes traditional religion preserved by these clans.

Empty of moral content and gradually losing all semblance of relevance to the priests' prevailing social condition as an imperial elite, ancestral Roman religion lapsed into a formalism unusual in its consequences. Native scruple and aristocratic ambition made religious acts the object of bitter political quarrels so long as the aristocracy ruled. Temples, statues, altars and gifts came to the gods because of aristocratic munificence. Religious formalism promoted a religious legalism that ultimately converted the Roman mind into one of the keenest instruments of legislation and jurisprudence.

Principal Priesthoods

The most important priesthoods were the panels of pontiffs, augurs and Ten Men For Sacrificing. The pontiffs oversaw many aspects of sacral law and jurisprudence. The chief pontiff served the state in the capacity of religious spokesman in the formal conduct of religion and frequently presided over meetings of the pontifical college which included the one priest-king, the flamens and the Vestal Virgins.

The pontiffs, and more particularly the chief pontiff, regularly decided matters of law and sacrilege put to them. The augurs were charged with constant surveillance of the well-being of the land and people from a religiously technical point of view. Their technical expertise also had political ramifications, for they could disrupt public assemblies and void elections by proclamation of some religious miscarriage or detection of an ill omen. Foreign cults and rites were entrusted to the Ten Men For Sacrificing.

Some deities, but by no means all, enjoyed the services of their own priest, called a flamen, and the flamens exhibit an early stage of Roman religion (see JUPITER). Another kind of priesthood was the sodality, the Luperci and the Salii being representative examples. The Luperci, divided into two bands, performed a purification of the Palatine Hill on 15 February. Garbed only in loincloths, they struck unclean objects with a strip of goatskin called 'Juno's cloak'. The Salii, also divided into two bands, performed throughout March on behalf of Mars, whose divinity was associated with the new year of growth and war.

Ordinary religious ceremonies included the dinner or the sacrifice. A sacral supper might be offered only to the god or gods, and every September Jupiter alone received a dinner of the harvest fruits. Extraordinary situations could demand a banquet for a group of deities. Equally efficacious were regular suppers of which men and a god partook. While in later times invitations to a sacral dinner might be limited to priests and magistrates, early universal custom respected inclusion of all worshippers. This kind of ceremony differs from the sacrifice, which was usually a total offering of one food to a god.

The Romans gave their gods what they themselves ate. Animal victims were the pig, sheep or cow, rarely the goat and only in one known case the horse. The animal had to be ritually pure; otherwise, some attention might be paid to its selection according to sex and colour. Besides animals the Romans offered foodstuffs of grain and fruit or wine and milk. Incense was introduced very early and was presumably acquired locally long before the oriental frankincense was imported. Burnt sacrifice was made on an altar, which might be a stone hearth or turf specially cut and piled for the ceremony.

Cleansing ceremonies were many. A common type was the procession of a pig, sheep and bullock (*suovetaurilia*) around the area to be purified and their slaughter for the good of the soil. Like other ancient peoples, the Romans firmly believed in the divinity of a given place or some social unit. Sometimes the local god was called simply Genius of This Place or God Who Watches Over This Place. Otherwise the deity had the name of the place itself. Any sojourn in a place prompted sacrifice if not a more permanent gift. Also the full range of governmental offices and communities, as well as the multitude of military units, worshipped their several Genii or the like.

The Romans were keenly aware of the strength that the land imparted to its inhabitants. When they conquered and wholly absorbed another people, they ritually summoned the chief local god (or gods) from the conquered land to Rome where the alien god was properly domiciled. The vanquished town and its farmland might be placed under a perpetual curse by uprooting its boundary-markers, sowing salt in its furrows and consigning the town and land to gods of the underworld with prayer to Jupiter and Tellus, Heaven and Earth. This ceremony was called *devotio*, as was that personal act of self-dedication whereby a general would literally sacrifice himself to the enemy to gain a victory for his people.

Devotio was but a particular kind of vow or promise which Romans were wont to make in a moment of stress or need. Many religious donations from high and low stemmed from the vow (*ex voto*). The customary form for keeping one's promise was to pay or loosen the vow (*votum solvere*). Romans seldom offered what was not due.

Augury not only acknowledged the necessity of keeping the land productive and clean; it also embraced the act of bird-watching, called the auspices, which figured prominently in Roman public and private life (see AUGURY). Distinct from augury was the skill of haruspicy, which the Romans borrowed from the Etruscans, in whose families the semi-official skill was practised. Haruspicy was that form of divination whereby the gods' will was made known through scrutiny of an animal's entrails.

The Gods at Home

Most Romans left the celebration of the civil gods to the state priests. At home and within the tradition-bound clans, private worship continued unabated for centuries. Indeed the extent, variety and tenacity of private cult demonstrates how gods were so deeply rooted in pagan hearts. The primitive centre of the household cult was the hearth. The name of the goddess Vesta means no more than the hearth-fire. Vesta's public cult of the City's fire, kept by her virgins, grew as her domestic cult declined.

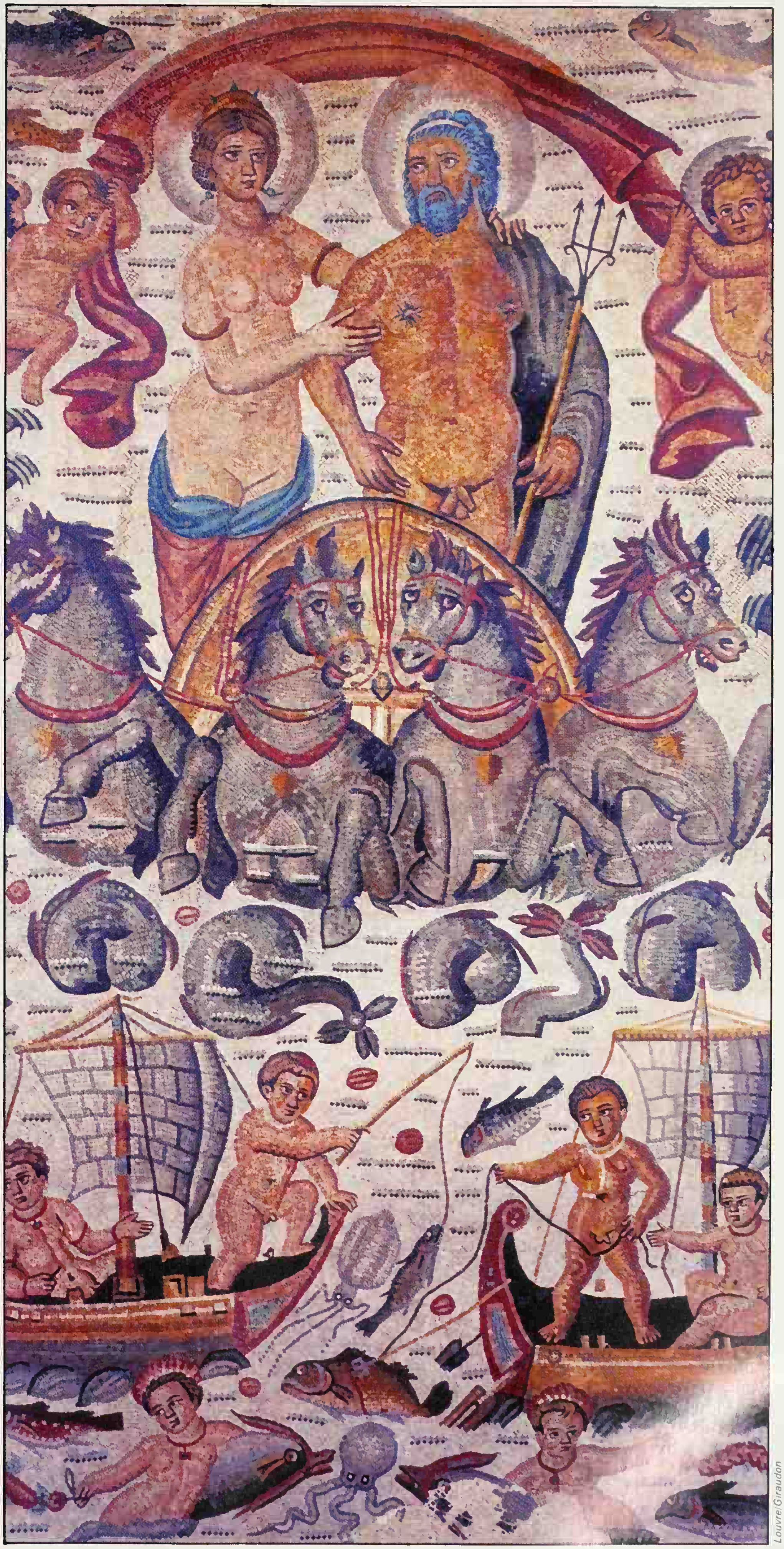
Other domestic deities were the Penates, Lares and Genius. The Penates were gods of the food cupboard (*penus*). The Lares occupied the hearth but also functioned elsewhere (see LARES). The Genius typifies the house cult and the Roman mentality. The word signifies the procreative force of the male householder. It was honoured at least on every birthday by libations of wine. The Genius joined the Lares in a small shrine with an artificial hearth set in every dining-room and was often portrayed between the two Lares. He was a model householder, wearing a toga, holding in one hand a horn of plenty and in the other a wine-saucer.

Although some ancient authors give the impression that the domestic gods received little more than perfunctory attention, the physical remains, especially those of Pompeii, eloquently counter such an impression. Every household had its altar. Besides the painted or sculptured Lares and Genius are found a wide variety of statuettes of other gods, coins left in safekeeping and ceremonial utensils, not the least important of which was the candelabrum or oil-lamp that reminds us of the candle – which the electric bulb has replaced – before the madonnas in Italian kitchens and on Italian street corners.

The humble cults flourished on the streets and in the countryside. When the Emperor Augustus encouraged some form of worship of the ruler, he allowed the imperial Genius to join the neighbourhood Lares so that his family's pre-eminence came daily to the attention of the Roman lower classes. Another typical and widespread deity of the lower class was Spes, 'Hope'. Innumerable tablets, statues, reliefs, paintings, altars, shrines and chapels which have come to light in Italy and throughout the Roman Empire attest the religious depth and sincerity of untold thousands. Although the popular enthusiasm for the great state cults declined, no one can assert that religious apathy prevailed among the Romans. Indeed, Christianity's 'victory' was truly a victory, the often bloody finale to a long battle. The imperial cult, worship of the dead emperors as gods and the live one as a divine Genius or Divine Will (*numen*), was by no means so superficial as might be believed. The early Christian emperors permitted it to continue in certain areas, although they forbade actual sacrifice.

Although Roman religion welcomed cults

Mosaic of Neptune with his consort Amphitrite, surrounded by his subjects: Neptune's festival vas celebrated on 23 July when the god was nvoked to increase the water supply of the Tiber during the dry summer


Louvre/Giraudon

ind gods from many foreign and conquered areas, it did not freely digest all ancient manifestations known elsewhere. For nstance, magic and astrology never figure n Roman religion. Prophets and oracles might be heeded but they remained peculiar or alien. Visions were not uncommon, but livine epiphanies (appearances of the gods) were rare. The Romans sought knowledge of he future from either haruspicy or the lots. The latter were usually wooden tokens or trips inscribed with some ambiguous phrase which the divinity of a place issued. Although men hawking lots or fortunes could be found in Rome, the great centres of prediction by lots were at a little distance from Rome. The most famous of all such hrines was the magnificent temple complex et atop the citadel hill of Praeneste, modern Palestrina. The deity of this place, alled Fortuna Primigenia, issued lots to the igh and the low for centuries.

Romans and Italians reported to the pon-iffs unnatural occurrences which, if they appened in grave times, might cause mass ysteria and required expiation – androgynous babies, animals with too many limbs r heads, rains of bloody meat, mice gnawing gold, bulls mounting brazen cows and like phenomena. On rare occasions such prodigies could even prompt human sacri-ice. Thus what was contrary to Nature could cause acts contrary to the norms of Roman religion.

The religious beliefs of the Roman people emained without the slightest moral tone: hey wanted to be in good standing with the orces of Nature. The Roman's attitude oward his gods somewhat resembles the ituation in early Israel. Romans expected he deity to act generously on their behalf or not to act at all. If the deity acted in the nanner expected, he was rewarded with a gift of an offering or a sacrifice. If he failed oo often or acted too badly, he was aban-oned for another. The Romans believed hat certain deities watched over them and upposed that others took care of their neighbours. To this end, they felt it neces-ary to deprive their enemies of their gods, heir sacred utensils and all means of wor-hip. The modern mind may find this mode f religion criminally selfish but the Romans eldom questioned the efficacy of a religion which had grown outward from a bend on n Italian river to embrace the greater part f Europe, North Africa and the Near East. They sought only to improve it by admitting new gods to their worship. They found it quite difficult to hold with a belief in one God when many gods had served them so ong and so well. (See also FOUNDING OF ROME; and articles on individual deities.)

R.E.A. PALMER

URTHER READING: C. Bailey, *Phases in the Religion of Ancient Rome* (Greenwood Press, 1972); R.M. Ogilvie, *The Romans and their Gods* (Norton, 1970).

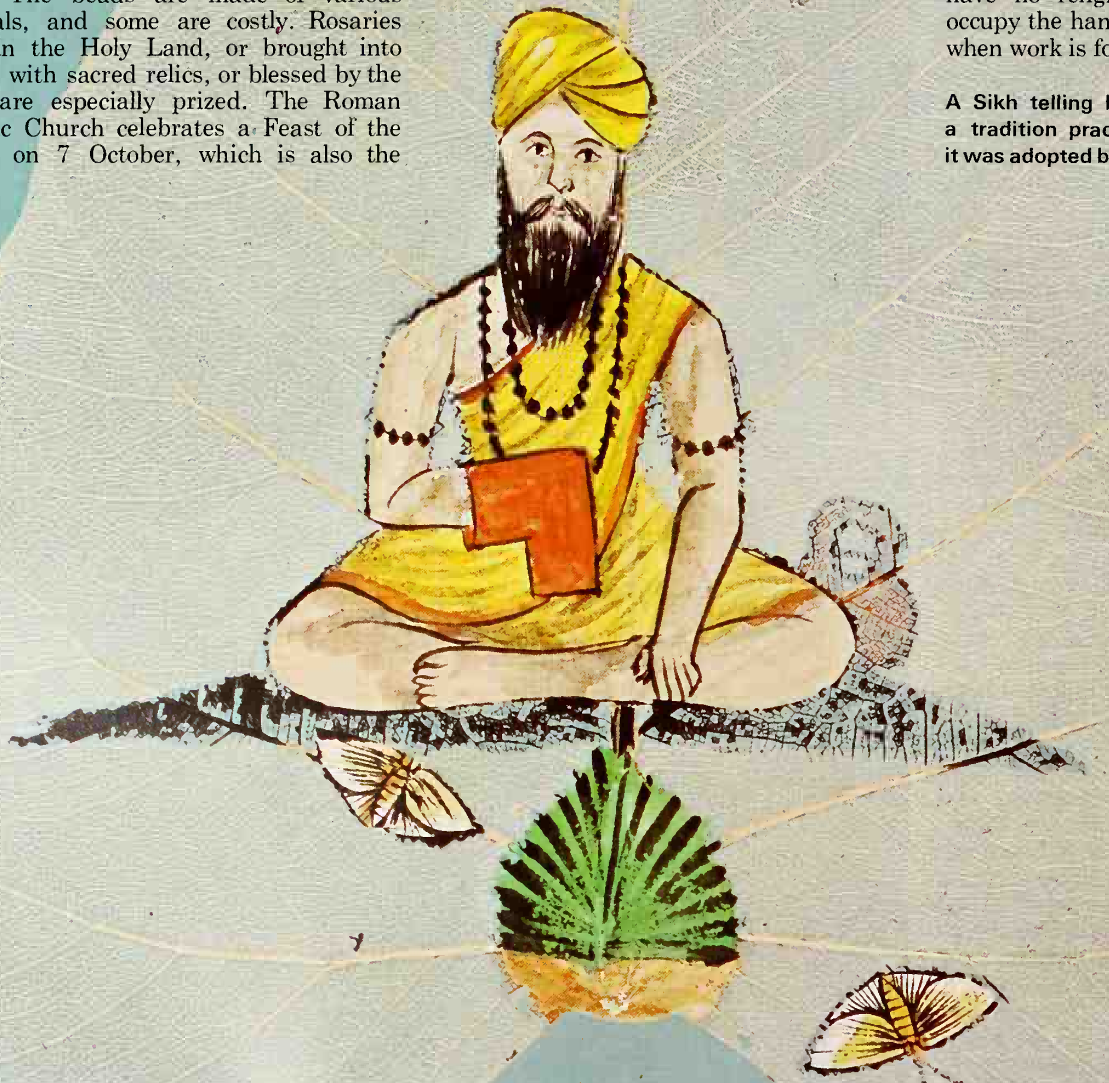
ROSARY

THE ROSARY is a familiar adjunct of Roman Catholic devotion. Its complete form consists of 150 beads, joined by a chain and divided into decades (groups of ten) by fifteen larger beads. These beads form a chaplet, to which a pendant is attached, comprising one large and three smaller beads and a crucifix. The rosary is designed to assist a scheme of prayer and meditation. The Lord's Prayer (*Paternoster*) is recited on the larger beads, and the 'Hail, Mary' (*Ave Maria*) on the small beads. The recitation of each decade of *Aves* is followed by the saying of the *Gloria* ('Glory be to the Father'). Each of the decades has a special theme for meditation, selected from the five Joyful, the five Sorrowful, and the five Glorious Mysteries of the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary, including such incidents as the Annunciation, the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ, and the Crowning of the Virgin Mary. It is customary to limit the act of devotion to one of these Mysteries at a time. The beads help to guide the course of devotion and to record its progress.

Rosaries are regarded as 'instruments of grace', and are specially blessed by an authorized priest, with prayer and holy water. The beads are made of various materials, and some are costly. Rosaries made in the Holy Land, or brought into contact with sacred relics, or blessed by the Pope, are especially prized. The Roman Catholic Church celebrates a Feast of the Rosary on 7 October, which is also the anniversary of the Christian victory over the Turks at Lepanto in 1571, to which the liturgical recitation of the Rosary is believed to have contributed. The Virgin Mary is closely associated with this victory and the Feast of the Rosary. Rosaries, consisting of different numbers of beads, are also used in other forms of devotional exercise in the Orthodox Churches and the Coptic Church of Egypt.

Whatever the date of the beginning of the practice in Christian Europe, the devotional use of beads had long before been established in the East. The Sanskrit term *japa-mala*, 'muttering chaplet', describes the function of the rosary, as a means of recording the number of prayers muttered. In Hinduism the form of the rosary differs according to the sect using it. The Buddhist rosary generally consists of 108 beads, and its use undoubtedly originated in India. The rosary was greatly used in Tibet, both by monks and laity; it was made of varying materials, and its colour related to the divinity worshipped. It was also employed there for divination as well as prayer.

The rosary used by Moslems generally has 99 beads, with a 'leader' acting as a terminal. The 99 beads relate to the 99 names of Allah, while the 'leader' denotes the essential name, Allah. Jewish rosaries have no religious use, but serve only to occupy the hands on sabbaths and holy days when work is forbidden.



A Sikh telling his beads inside a cloth bag – a tradition practised in the East long before it was adopted by Christianity

Associated in life with celebrations, success, homecomings and above all love, paradoxically the rose is also associated with death: roses were often planted over graves and to drop red rose petals on the ground was a portent of death

ROSE

FEW FLOWERS can have so many allusions in myth and folklore as the rose in almost every country in the Northern hemisphere, where they originally grew wild. As John Gerard the botanist wrote, the rose 'doth preserve the chiefest and most principal place among all floures whatsoever, being not only esteemed for his bountie, vertues and his fragrant smell, but also because it is the honour and ornament of our English sceptre.'

Many of the rose legends, unfortunately, are somehow both a little obvious and distinctly sentimental. Roses, especially red ones, almost inevitably stem from spilt blood – blood from the foot of Venus pursuing Adonis, from the dead Adonis himself, or, on a more sombre level, the blood of Christ, especially in connection with one belief, that the Crown of Thorns was made of rose briars. There are many tales about transformations of girls in danger into roses, and equally many of innocent girls about to be burnt alive whose funeral pyres become bowers of roses. Up on Olympus Cupid spills nectar and, where it touches the ground, roses arise.

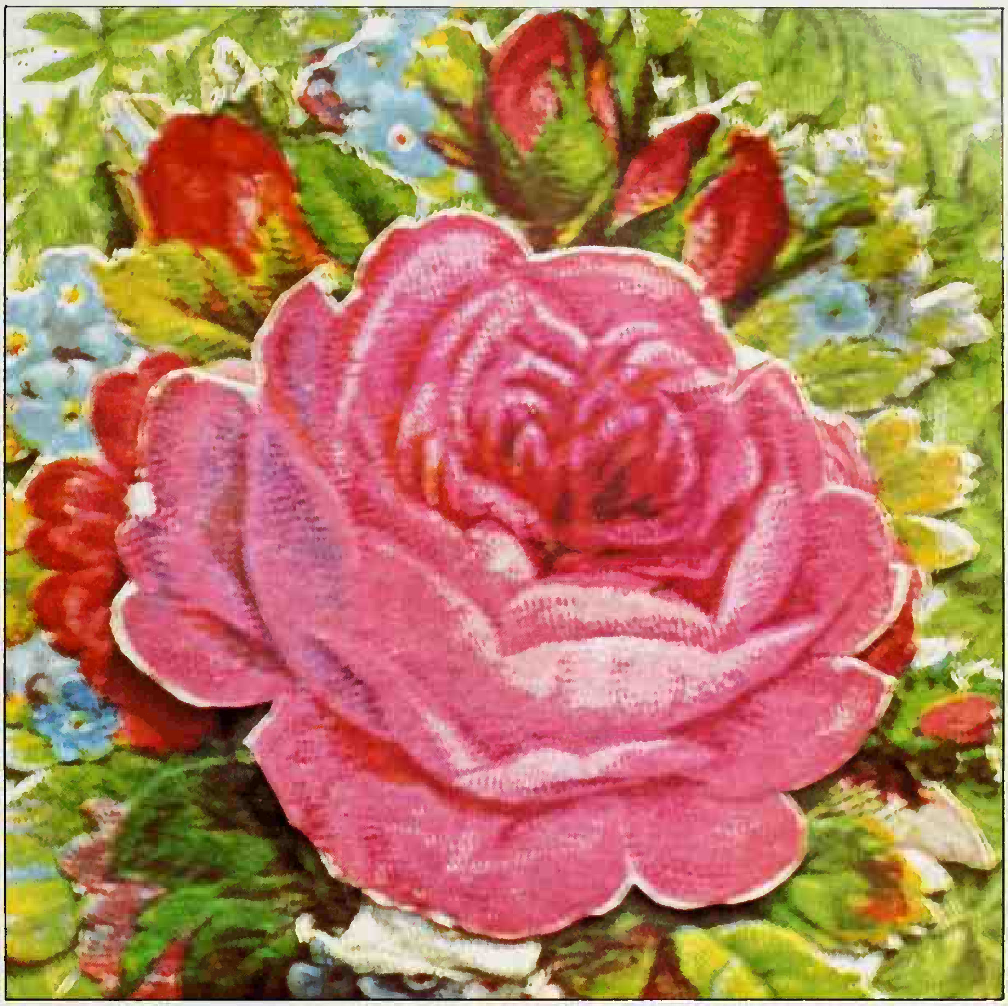
The Islamic belief is more earthy: roses are supposed to spring from sweat dripping from Mohammed's brow. The Hindus have tales involving Vishnu and Brahma, and Lakshmi, who was born from a rose and became Vishnu's consort. To the Scandinavians, the rose was under the protection of fairies and dwarfs and their king Laurin. It is a little odd that this Scandinavian rose garden is today immortalized in the jagged pinnacles known as the Rosengarten in the Dolomites.

Flower of Venus

Later the rose became symbolic of love and beauty, and was the special flower of Venus: portraits of the goddess often show her crowned with roses or carrying a rose-edged sceptre, while Cupid and Hymen were also typically represented with rose wreaths. The statue of Bacchus would be crowned with the flower on certain occasions, while white roses were thrown at Cybele's statue in the procession of the Corybantes.

The Romans took the rose seriously, cultivating it in enormous quantities, even in winter – partly for decoration, but mainly for its petals, which were used to carpet banqueting halls, strew couches, fill cushions or to make wine or attar. Shrines of gods and monuments to famous men were garlanded with roses, as were triumphal arches and chariots on special occasions, while honoured persons wore rose wreaths at public games.

Rose bushes were planted to celebrate homecomings, and soldiers planted them on returning from war. In keeping with the flower's link with Venus, the couple at a wedding wore chaplets of roses, the bride's including myrtle.



G. L. Carlisle

A rose on a Valentine card stands for love, a meaning that stretches back into classical mythology, when it was the flower of Venus

The curious phrase *sub rosa* is often quoted as deriving from this association with Venus. Henry Peacham, the essayist, paraphrasing an anonymous Roman poet in 1638, explained it as follows: 'The rose being sacred to Venus, whose amorous and stolen sports, that they might never be revealed, her sonne Cupid would neede dedicate it to Harpocrates, the God of Silence.' One authority, however, refers the origin of the phrase to a meeting between Greeks and Xerxes, the Persian king, held in a rose bower near a temple of Minerva. Anyhow, the rose became a symbol of silence, secrecy and confidences, and secret meetings were described as 'sub rosa'; a rose might be suspended from the ceiling as a symbol of secrecy, those who wished to speak without having their words repeated might wear chaplets of roses, while in the 16th and 17th centuries it was customary to paint or carve a rose on the ceilings of council chambers and banqueting halls for the same reason.

The Golden Rose

With the Christians a whole new line of legend began. The wild rose with its five petals was associated with the five wounds of Christ, while red roses were symbolic of martyr's blood. Although it is an attribute of certain saints, notably St Rosa of Viterbo and St Rosalia of Palermo, the rose became in particular a flower associated with the Virgin Mary. In the Middle Ages there was a festival called Rose Sunday, which perpetuated the belief that, after her ascent to heaven, the Virgin's tomb was found filled with roses and lilies. At a celebration in Rome, that of the Madonna of the Snows, white rose petals were dropped on the congregation from the chapel ceiling.

In the 12th century it became the custom for the Pope to bestow golden roses on foreign sovereigns to whom he wished to convey esteem, to some other particularly distinguished person who had assisted the Church or perhaps to some especially worthy congregation. This golden rose was blessed on the fourth Sunday in Lent, and over the centuries it gradually became more costly and ostentatious, with jewelled ornamentation. Curiously enough, the presentation of the Pope's rose to women was so often apparently followed by misfortune that many declared themselves unwilling to receive it.

Roses were also associated in a number of different ways with death. From Roman times onwards the flowers were often strewn on graves; cemeteries are still known as 'rose gardens' in parts of Switzerland, while in Turkey the flower is sometimes carved on the tombstones of women. Roman wills sometimes specified the planting of roses on the grave. Since the white rose is a symbol of virginity, a bush of this colour was often planted on the grave of a virgin; a red one might be used for people

Roses of the Regiment

The dinner table is decorated with roses. Officers wear one red and one yellow rose... After the loyal toast has been drunk and glasses refilled, the President, when required by the Commanding Officer, rings his handbell, and the Commanding Officer rises and proposes the Minden Toast in the words "We will now rise and drink in solemn silence to those who fell at Minden".

Later, when the Bandmaster has been entertained, and the waiters have withdrawn, the President orders the Mess Sergeant to place, with the President's compliments, a rose in front of each officer who has not previously eaten one with a Minden Regiment. As soon as the roses are before them, these officers rise and eat the roses. The roses are served in champagne . . . Officers eating roses stand on their chairs, but do not put a foot on the table; they remain standing on their chairs till they have eaten the rose and drunk the champagne. When there are only a few officers to eat roses, they are handed them in succession as each one finishes; but when there are several officers the roses are given them in quick succession before the previous one has finished. Custom does not require an officer to eat a rose at a Minden Dinner more than once during his service.

Customs and Practices of the
Regiment, XX the Lancashire Fusiliers

renowned for good works. John Aubrey, the diarist, records the planting of red roses on the graves of dead sweethearts; the surviving partner tended the rose, re-covered the grave with turf regularly, and was supposed not to remarry.

The Saxons believed that, on the death of a child, the ghostly figure of Death could be seen to leave the house and pick a rose outside. To drop red rose petals on the ground was a portent of death, especially if you were wearing or carrying the flower.

Of War and Royalty

What of the representations of the rose? The cathedral rose window is the largest – a style derived, according to some authorities, from mosques and brought back to Europe by crusaders. As the heraldic emblem of England – a rose under a crown – it can be seen in carvings and paintings; it has been a device on royal coats of arms and on coins since the time of Edward I.

The Red Rose of Lancaster and the White Rose of York were symbols of the terrible 30 years of the Wars of the Roses, and Shakespeare, in *Henry VI*, gives a graphic, if perhaps unhistorical, account of how the leaders of the faction 'picked their colours'. It is probable that this York and Lancaster rose was what we now call *Rosa damascena versicolor*, whose colours Shakespeare describes in a sonnet:

> The Roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
> One blushing shame, another white despair;
> A third, nor red nor white, had stolen of both...

There is a very old tradition that all roses were originally white and became red only after blood had been spilt on them. There is an ancient Persian tale associating the bulbul or nightingale with the rose, which was turned from white to red by the bird pressing its breast on a thorn; modern legend still tells how, to keep awake at night and sing strongly, the nightingale continues to do this.

Oscar Wilde retold this tale: in his version a nightingale, touched by a student's distress that he cannot find the red rose his sweetheart insists upon, sings all night against a thorn so that the bush may produce a red rose. Alas, the girl throws away the flower, exclaiming that she expected nothing less than jewels.

That favourite fairy tale 'Beauty and the Beast' centres on the rose which a merchant's daughter asks him to bring back from his travels. He plucks one in the garden of a castle which he thinks deserted; the Beast who in fact dwells there, however, threatens to kill the merchant for the theft unless he gives him his daughter. Beauty saves her father's life by agreeing to go; eventually the Beast persuades her to marry him and, as in all good fairy tales, this releases him from a spell and he is at once restored to his handsome, princely human form.

A more recent rose tale is in *Alice in Wonderland*, where the gardeners have to paint white roses red at the whim of the Queen of Hearts; and there is the talking rose in *Through the Looking-Glass* who told

19th-century impression of Shakespeare's scene in *Henry VI* when York and Lancaster plucked the white and red rose to represent allegiance to each side in the Wars of the Roses

Alice 'you're beginning to fade you know and then one can't help one's petals getting a little untidy.'

An amusing modern tale about roses occurs in J.J. Granville's satire *Les Fleurs Animées*, published in 1848, in which he pictures Eglantine (Rose) as a blue-stocking literary hostess, so involved in literature, entertaining and patronage of handsome young writers that she cannot attend to the household chores, even to looking after the baby, which all devolve upon her wretched husband. Elsewhere in the book Granville has a charming picture of the rose as Queen of Flowers, receiving homage from green rose-chafers.

Dreams of Love

In folklore, to dream of roses should mean success in love, unless it is of a white flower, which is unlucky. Marriage divination could be carried out by picking a rosebud on Midsummer Day, wrapping it in paper and keeping it until Christmas Day. If the bud was still fresh, the girl wore it to church, when her husband-to-be would approach and take the bloom from her. If the girl found the rose-bud withered this was a very bad omen.

A rather nerve-racking ritual was designed to enable a girl to haunt her erring lover in his dreams, until in desperation he returned to her. For this three roses had to be picked on Midsummer Eve: one was buried under a yew tree, the second in a newly dug grave and the third placed under the girl's pillow for three nights and subsequently burnt.

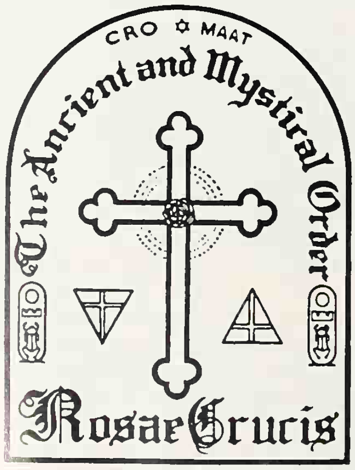
In the Victorian language of flowers it was possible, by choosing different colours and varieties of rose, to express over 40 sentiments: a red rose meant passion, a white spiritual love and a yellow one infidelity; a rose-bud indicated an awakened heart and a full-blown rose beauty that will inevitably fade – perhaps the last spiteful message of the rejected lover?

A.J. HUXLEY

FURTHER READING: E. Wilkins, *The Rose-Garden Game* (Gollancz, 1969).

Rose Cross

Emblem of the Rosicrucians; both rose and cross have a rich symbolism and together can be interpreted in many ways: as male and female; Virgin Mary and Christ; unclean and purified; material and spiritual; sensual and spiritual love; God made flesh, and vice versa.
(See ROSICRUCIANS.)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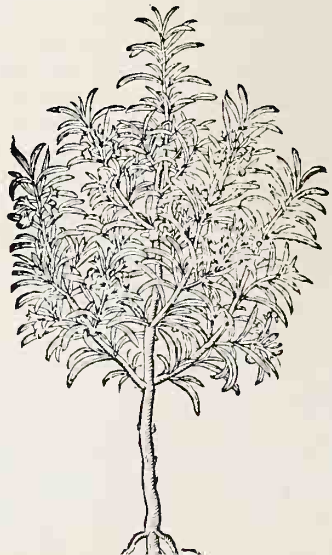
The Ancient and Mystical Order
Rosae Crucis

Rosemary

A holy and magical plant in folklore, protecting against evil spirits, fairies, witches and storms; symbol of remembrance, it used to be carried by mourners at a funeral and dropped on the coffin to show that the dead person would not be forgotten; sprigs of it were dropped in the wine at a wedding feast before the bride and groom drank, as a token of faithfulness in love.



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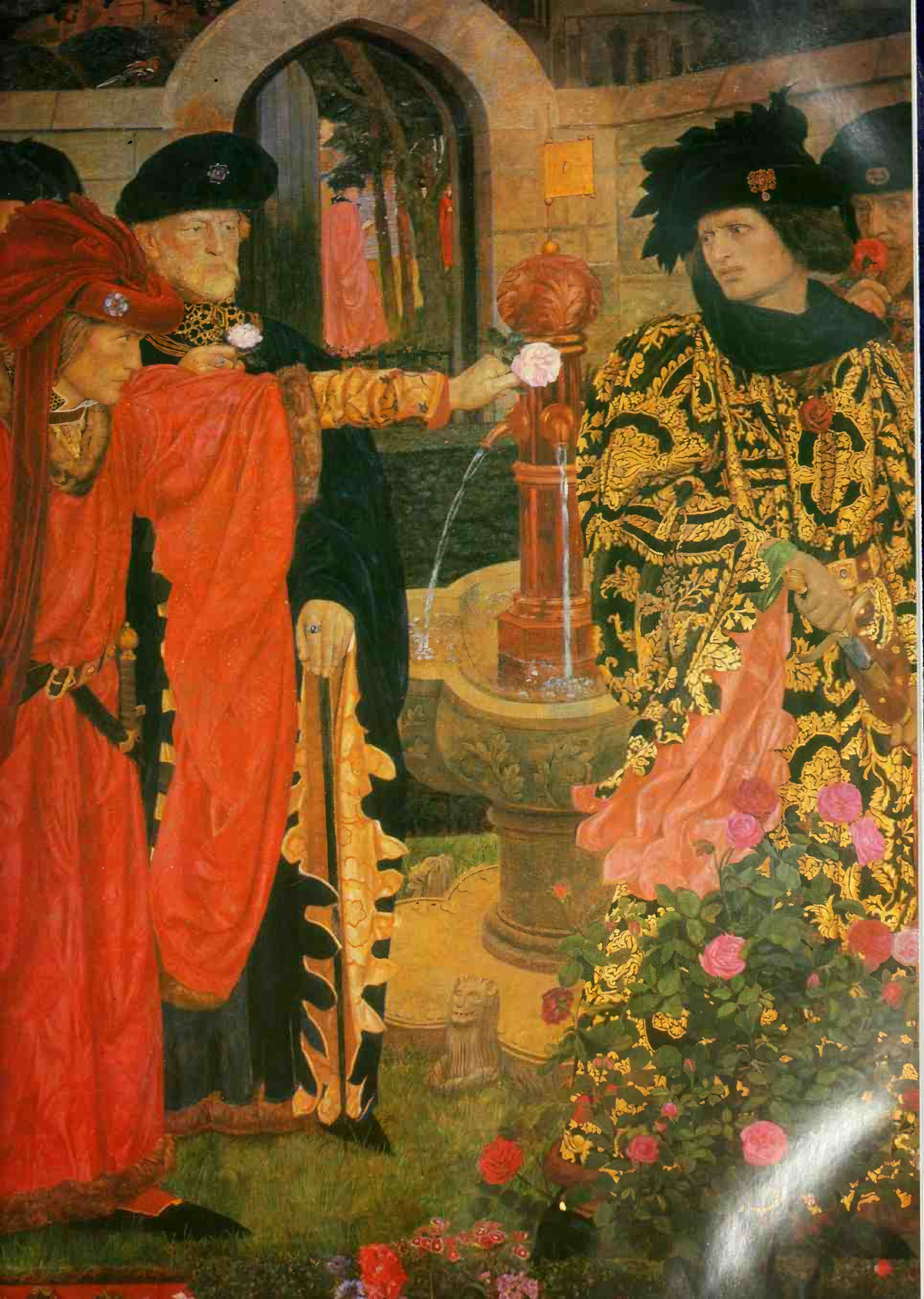

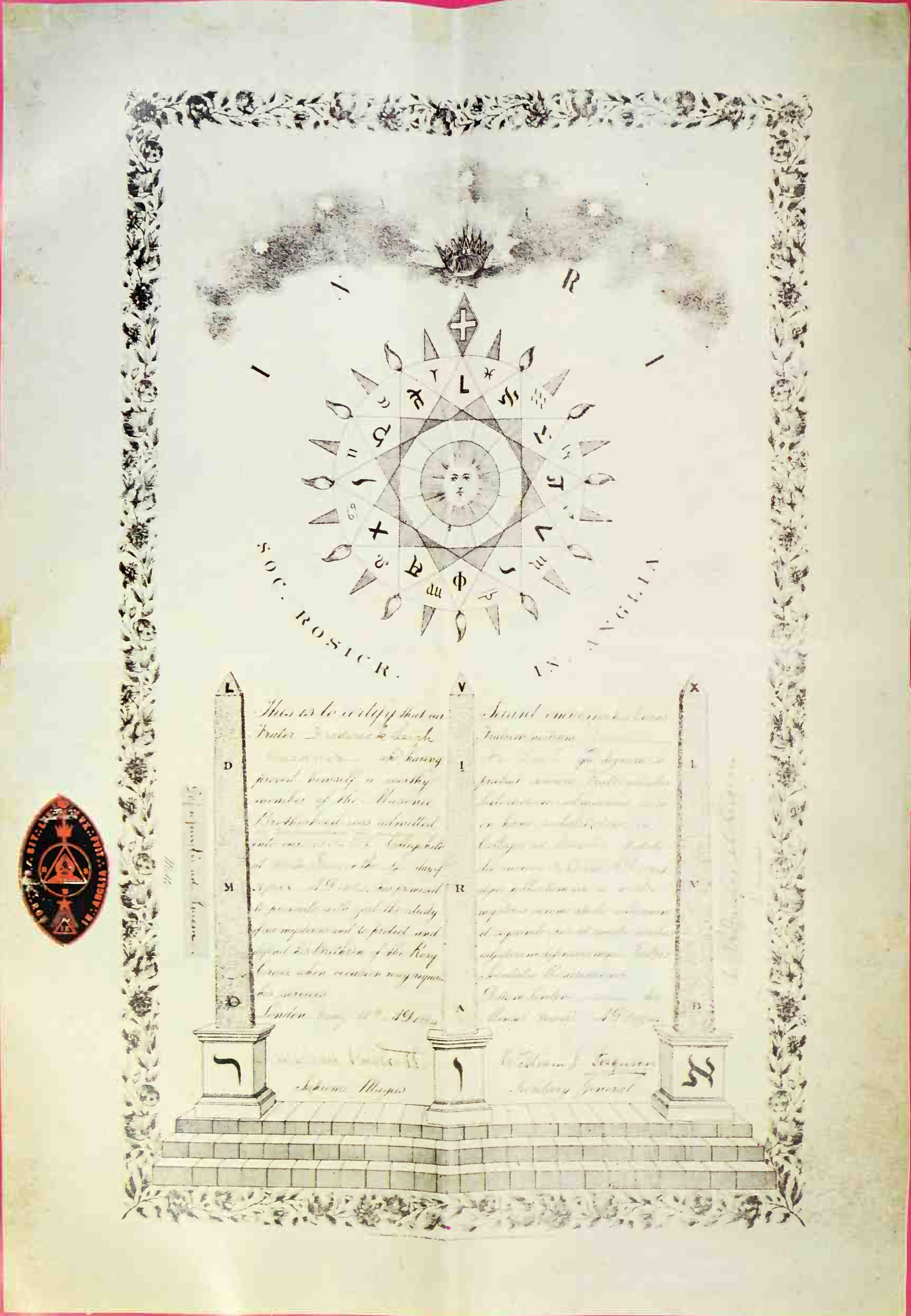
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This is to certify that our
Frater Frederick Leigh
[illegible] who having
proved himself a worthy
member of the Masonic
Brotherhood was admitted
into our [illegible] College [illegible]
at [illegible] on the [illegible] day of
[illegible] A.D. [illegible] has promised
to persevere with zeal the study
of our mysteries and to protect and
defend his Brethren of the Rosy
Cross when occasion may require
his services
London [illegible] 19[illegible]

[illegible]
Supreme Magus

Sciant omnes [illegible]
Fraterem nostrum [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Datum Londini [illegible]
[illegible] 19[illegible]

William J. Ferguson
Secretary General

ROSICRUCIANS

'They opened the door and discovered a seven-sided vault... in the centre of which was a circular altar'; the name Rosicrucian has been loosely applied to a variety of occult groups, but the legend of Christian Rosenkreuz, founder of the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross, is forgotten

IT IS GENERALLY supposed that the Rosicrucians were members of a German mystical or occult order that suddenly became active during the second decade of the 17th century, but could nevertheless trace its origins back to the early part of the 15th century. It is widely thought, too, that the Rosicrucians possessed important and arcane wisdom that has been transmitted to their spiritual heirs and successors. Thus even today there are people who claim some form of Rosicrucian 'adeptship'.

One of the most interesting features of the Rosicrucian legend is the persistence with which it has survived, particularly in circles identified with occultism. The mythical Christian Rosenkreuz (literally 'Rosy Cross') represents a forerunner of the 'Secret Chiefs' who added lustre to Baron von Hund's Masonic Rite of the Strict Observance (Germany, late 18th century). They never existed, but there were many who believed in them.

Again, a century later, there were Madame Blavatsky's invisible 'Mahatmas', whose letters to her arrived literally out of thin air. They were also representatives of the 'Secret Chiefs' tradition. There is, too, a parallel between the Rosicrucian legend, with its small community of secret but somehow occultly powerful brethren, and the Masters of a more recent and equally unidentifiable 'Great White Lodge', who are also said to be guardians of hidden knowledge (see BLAVATSKY; MAHATMAS; MASTERS).

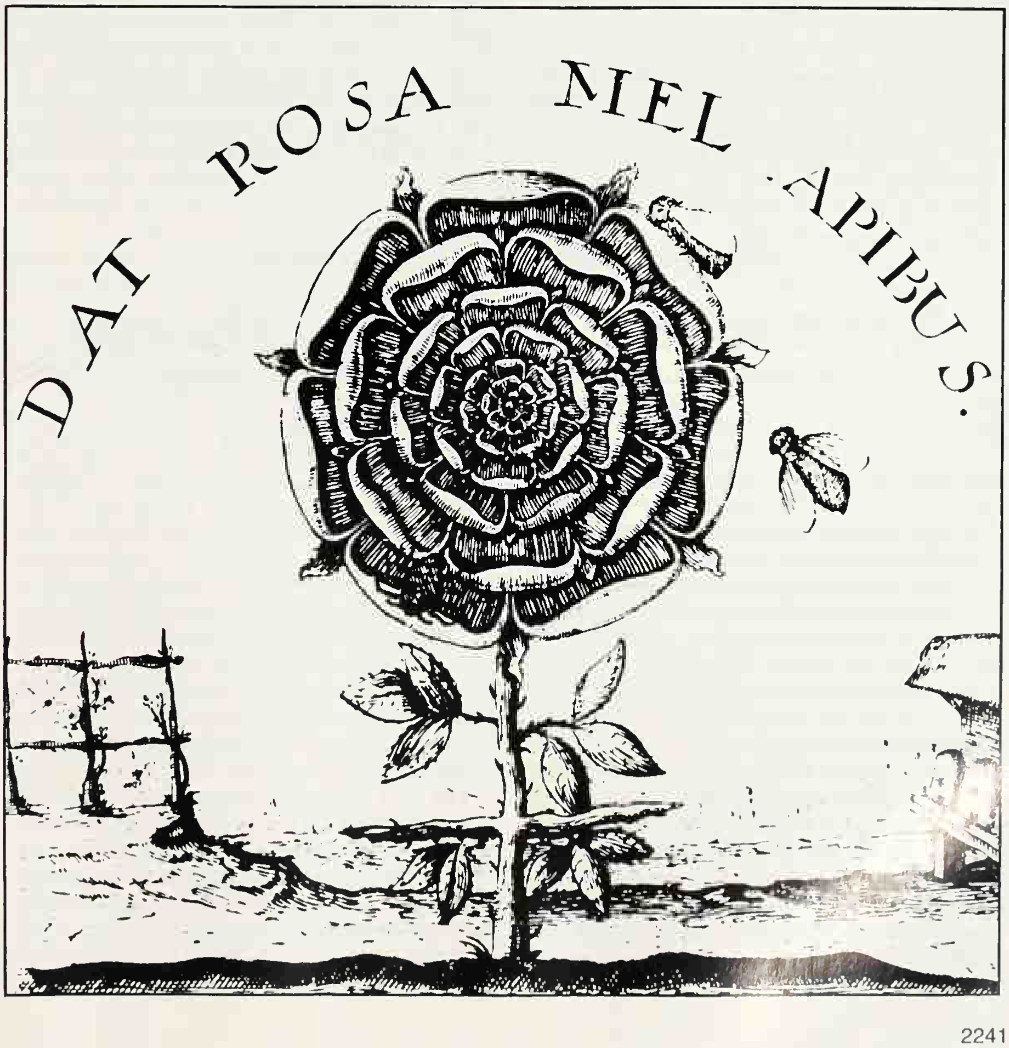
Archetypes of this nature, of which Christian Rosenkreuz is an important example, are of considerable psychological interest because they appear to fulfil a human necessity. Since the 1880s, for example, the concept of the 'Hidden Masters' has provided a substitute for the authority of the Church and its priests.

The Christian Rosenkreuz legend has now been in existence for more than 350 years. In the process of time, however, the main details of the legend, more especially its original form, have been largely forgotten and the word 'Rosicrucian' is associated with arcane or occult teachings.

The Original Legend

The substance of the Rosicrucian legend originated in three short books that were published anonymously between 1614 and 1616. The first, which was no more than a slim pamphlet, was printed at Kassel in Germany in 1614. Its title – in an abbreviated form – was *Fama Fraternitatis,* and it purported to come from a hitherto unknown Rosicrucian order or brotherhood. It contained no information whatever about the order's chiefs and where they might be found. A brief introduction announced the reason for the publication.

Its unknown author hoped for a 'general reformation' of the world and mankind by means of a harmonious fusion of the two major achievements of the past century: the Reformation, and advances in scientific knowledge. The *Fama* was in some respects a Utopian tract, but its message was presented so obscurely that its meaning was very difficult to understand. It begins with the story of Christian Rosenkreuz's travels in search of knowledge and true wisdom


DAT ROSA MEL APIBUS.

Gerald Yorke Collection/Michael Holford

The symbol of the rose and cross has a great variety of possible meanings, among which are fleshly love and spiritual love, matter and spirit, the unclean and the purified: from *Summum Bonum*, by Robert Fludd *Facing page* A certificate of membership in the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia, founded in 1866 by a group of Freemasons

They moved the circular altar, lifted a heavy bronze plate, and to their surprise beheld the body of Father Christian Rosenkreuz in a perfect state of preservation

and ends with an account of the order that commemorated his name.

Christian Rosenkreuz, the son of noble but poor parents, was placed in a monastery at the age of five and there learned some Greek and Latin. When he was still a youth a certain monk, Frater P.A.L., took him on a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. Frater P.A.L. died at Cyprus and hence never reached Jerusalem.

Christian Rosenkreuz continued the journey alone and in due course arrived at Damascus. While it was still his intention to go to Jerusalem, he remained at Damascus for a while because his medical skill was so highly esteemed. He now learned of the Wise Men at Damcar in Arabia and with difficulty made his way there; by this time he was 16 years old. He was given a warm welcome, as if he had long been expected. The Wise Men already knew his name and much to his surprise told him of secret matters relating to his old monastery. He learned Arabic and was able to translate the *Liber M*, a book which has not been identified, into Latin, and also greatly increased his knowledge of mathematics and the natural sciences.

After three years at Damcar he left and went to Egypt, but did not remain there for long. His friends at Damcar had told him about the learned scholars at Fez, which was his next destination. At Fez, once again, he acquired much secret and useful knowledge. Two years later he left for Spain. There he discoursed with eminent scholars but did not succeed in arousing their interest. At this point in the narrative the anonymous author mentioned that, while Paracelsus had not been a member of the Rosicrucian fraternity, he had nevertheless assiduously read the *Liber M*. When the *Fama* was published, in 1614, more than 70 years after his death, Paracelsus was still widely regarded as a Magus.

Disciples and Helpers

Disappointed by his experiences in Spain, Christian Rosenkreuz returned at last to Germany, his native land, where he built himself a light and airy house and began to write an account of his travels and philosophy. He continued to study mathematics there and constructed 'many beautiful instruments'. Three monks from his old monastery joined him as disciples and helpers, the Fratres (Brothers) G.V., I.A. and I.O. They pledged themselves to keep secret all that they learned from him, but to record everything in a manuscript book for the benefit of their successors.

Thus the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross began with four members. They wrote on magic, also the first part of the *Liber M*. However, the work was onerous and its progress was constantly interrupted by the many sick people who came to them for medical treatment.

Eventually their new building, called the 'Sanctus Spiritus', was ready. So Father Christian Rosenkreuz decided to accept a few more in his fraternity. The new members were Frater R.C., who was his nephew, Frater B., an accomplished painter, and the Fratres G.G. and P.D.

There were now eight members in all, all of them unmarried and pledged to chastity. Together they produced a whole library of books on every conceivable subject. One particular work, known as the *Axiomata*, was considered to be of special importance. Their tasks completed, the brethren went their various ways, leaving Fratres B. and P.D. with Father Christian Rosenkreuz.

Before they left a number of rules were formulated for the order. Firstly, none of the brethren was to exercise any profession except that of medicine, nor to accept any payment for his skill. Secondly, no distinctive dress was to be worn; instead they were to adopt the sartorial customs of the country in which they happened to be living (note the parallel with 'worker priests'). Thirdly, there was to be an annual gathering of the fraternity at the 'Sanctus Spiritus' on the 'Day of C'. (The anonymous author may have had the Feast of Corpus Christi in mind). Fourthly, each brother was to be on the look-out for a person worthy to succeed him when he died; fifthly, the initials R.C. were to be their seal, their password and their most cherished concern; and lastly the identity of the fraternity was to remain a closely-guarded secret for 100 years.

The first of the brethren to die was I.O. and, as Father R.C. had predicted, his death took place in England. This Brother was very learned in the Cabala and many stories were told about him in England, for example that he had cured the young Duke of Norfolk of leprosy. The date of Father R.C.'s death was unknown. All that a later generation of brethren knew about him was from whatever information was available in the library. Of the books there the *Axiomata*, the *Rotae Mundi* and the *Proteus* were regarded as the most important.

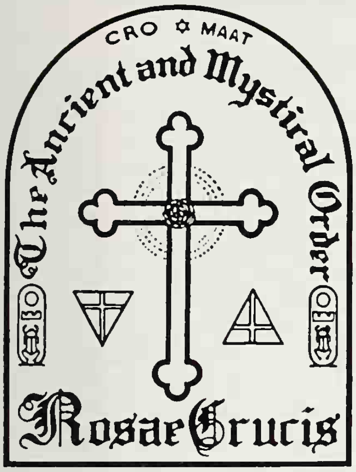
The day came, long after Father R.C.'s death, when Frater N., who was skilled in building and architecture, was about to go on a journey. Before he left he decided to make some alterations to the building. While the work was in progress he found a bronze tablet, which had previously been concealed, on which were inscribed the names of all who had been in the brotherhood in the distant past. A large nail protruded from the tablet. When the nail was pulled out and the tablet lifted away, and with it a large piece of plaster, a door was discovered. On the door itself was an inscription: *Post Centum Viginti Annos Patebo*, meaning 'After 120 years I will reappear'. Beneath the inscription there was a date, but the latter was not given in the *Fama*.

The Seven-Sided Vault

The following morning the door was opened, and inside the Brothers discovered a seven-sided vault or tomb, each side being eight feet high by five feet across. Furthermore, although the sun could not possibly shine inside the vault, it was illuminated as if by sunlight from the middle of the ceiling. In the centre of the vault there was a circular altar.

Each of the seven walls was divided into ten rectangles and in each wall there was a door that concealed a chest containing various objects, including copies of all the order's books, a copy of the *Vocabularium* of Paracelsus, the manuscript journal containing the record of Father Christian Rosenkreuz's life and travels, mirrors with strange, perhaps magical qualities, small bells and burning lamps. Everything had been left so that, were the order to disappear, it could be reconstructed even centuries later.

They moved the circular altar, lifted a heavy bronze plate, and to their surprise beheld the body of Father Christian Rosenkreuz, which was still in a perfect state of preservation. In his hand he held a manuscript copy of *Liber T*, which was written with letters of gold on parchment. They then replaced the bronze plate on the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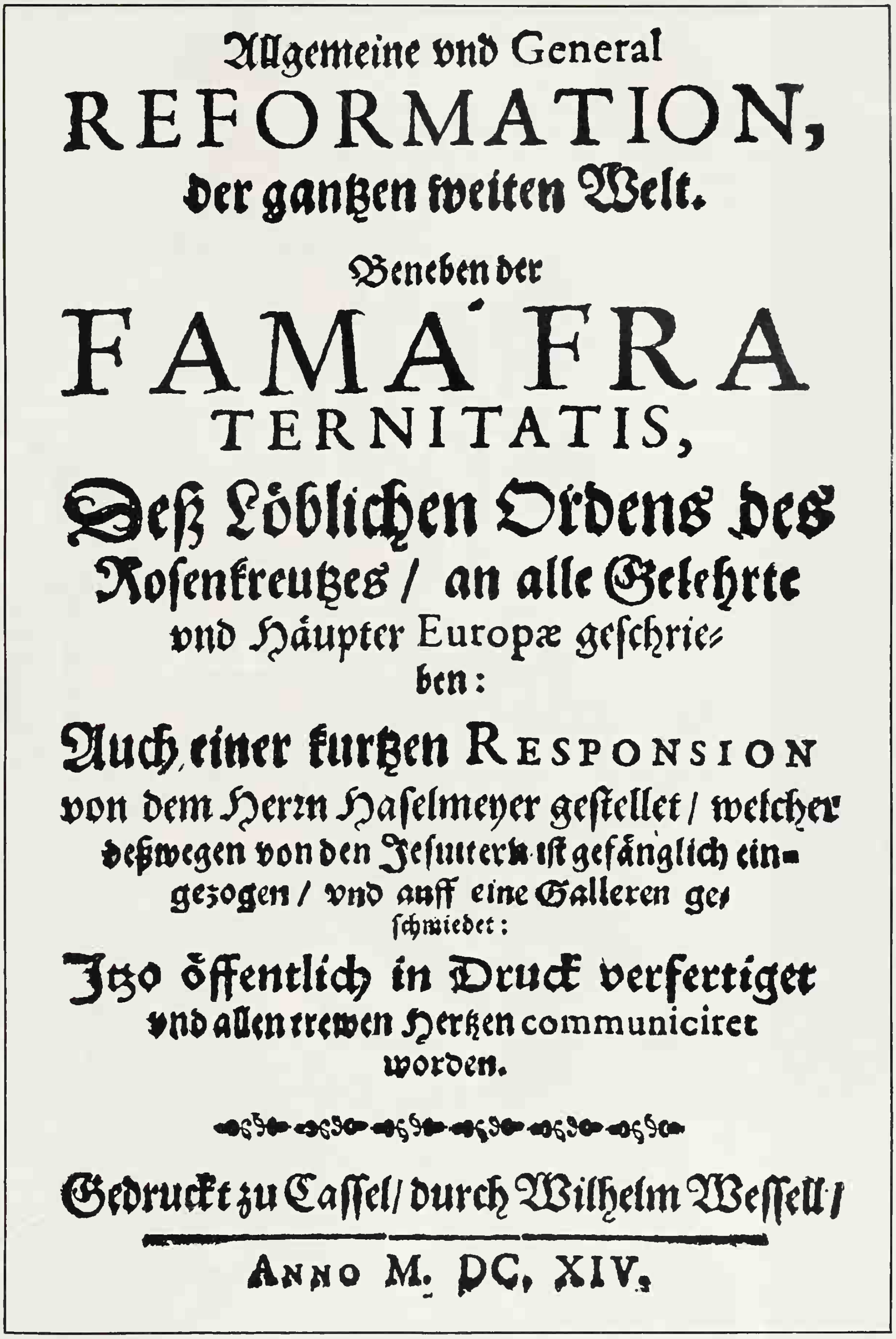
Rosae Crucis



Allgemeine vnd General
REFORMATION,
der gantzen weiten Welt.
Beneben der
FAMA FRA
TERNITATIS,
Deß Löblichen Ordens des
Roſenkreutzes / an alle Gelehrte
vnd Häupter Europæ geſchrie-
ben:
Auch einer kurtzen RESPONSION
von dem Herrn Haſelmeyer geſtellet / welcher
deßwegen von den Jeſuitern iſt gefänglich ein-
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ſchmiedet:
Jtzo öffentlich in Druck verfertiget
vnd allen trewen Hertzen communiciret
worden.

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Gedruckt zu Caſſel / durch Wilhelm Weſſell /
ANNO M. DC. XIV.

Library © Aldus Books

Right **Title page of the first edition of *Fama Fraternitatis*, 1614, purportedly issued by a secret brotherhood of adepts to promote a general reformation of the world and mankind: it was this book which first told the story of Christian Rosenkreuz *Above* Symbol of A.M.O.R.C., a modern American Rosicrucian society, founded by H. Spencer Lewis, who 'passed through transition' (died) in 1939**

coffin, closed the door of the vault and sealed it.

The Alchemical Wedding

So much for the legend as told in the *Fama Fraternitatis*. Its publication created a very lively curiosity. Indeed, so great was the demand for the book that it was reprinted three times in 1615 and again in 1617. There were also two Dutch editions in 1615, but the first English translation was not published until 1652.

The *Fama* was soon followed by the *Confessio Fraternitatis R.C.* – indeed, its publication had already been announced in the *Fama*. It appeared to be by the same anonymous author and was printed at Kassel in Latin and German in 1615. It contained no expansion of the story of Father Christian Rosenkreuz but did mention that he had been born in 1378. Since he is supposed to have lived until the age of 106, and to have reappeared again 120 years later, it will be noted that the date of his expected return coincided with the year of publication of the *Fama*.

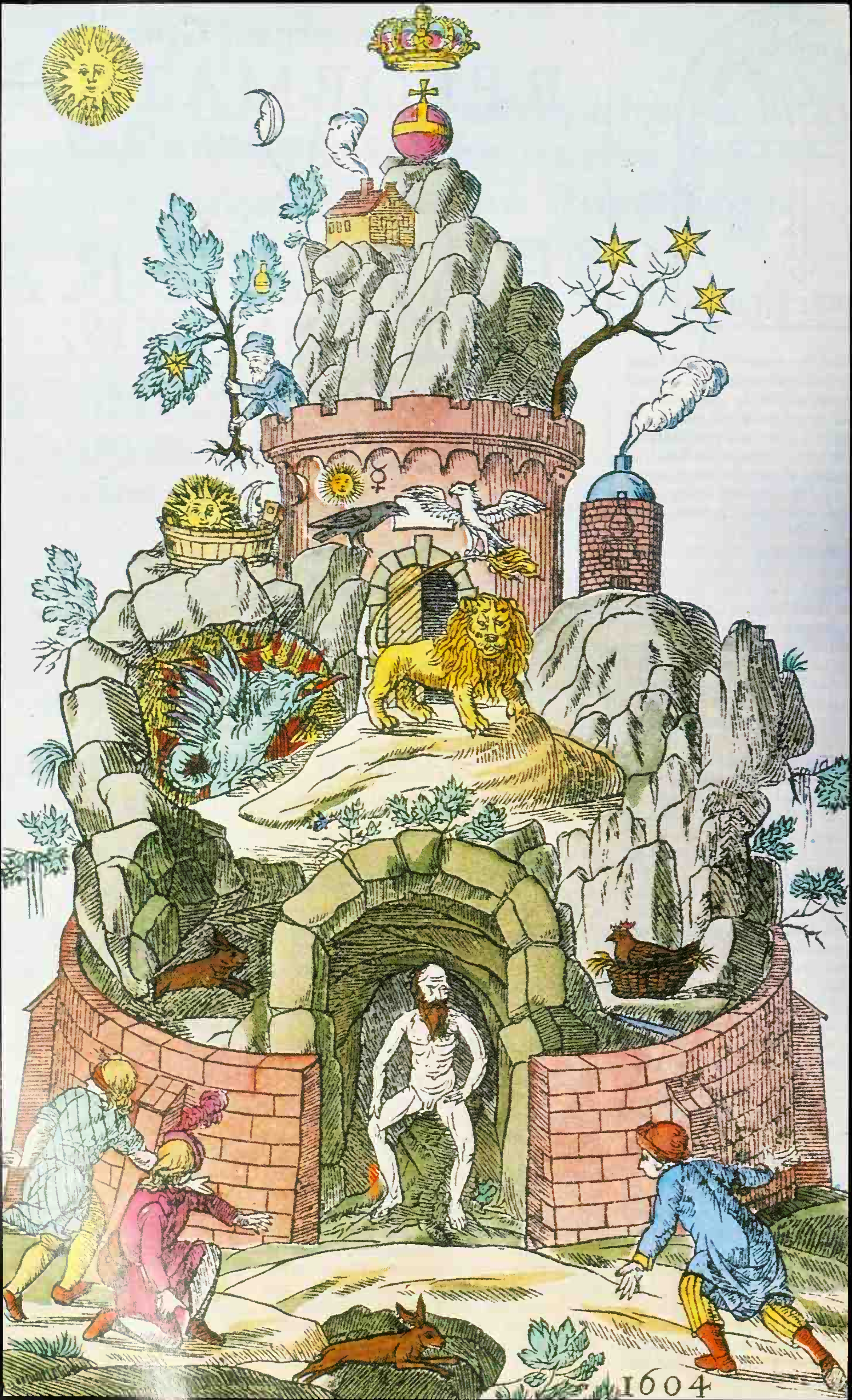
The *Confessio* contained 37 'reasons of our purpose and intention', meaning the brotherhood's policy, and invited its readers to join the Rosicrucian 'movement' but did not state how this could be achieved. The brotherhood's aims were stated vaguely rather than precisely, but the reader would have gathered without much difficulty that it was opposed to sectarianism and political strife. It proclaimed its antagonism to the papacy, to Islam and to the pretensions of quack alchemists.

The third and last of the three original Rosicrucian books was the *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreutz*, which was published at Strasburg in 1616 with three further editions during the same year. The first English version, *The Hermetick Romance: or the Chymical Wedding*, appeared in 1690. The word 'Chemical' should be construed in a vaguely alchemical sense.

This 'hermetic romance' presents a delightful fairy story, packed with a wealth of allegorical and symbolical detail. Its ultimate meaning is nowhere very clear and a detailed textual analysis presents considerable difficulties. However, the broad outline of the story is as follows: The principal character is an old man called Christian Rosenkreuz, apparently not the same person as the youngster who appears in the *Fama*. On the eve of Easter he was meditating, when a messenger in the shape of a 'fair and glorious lady', wearing an azure blue robe adorned with golden stars, suddenly appeared and delivered a letter. It was sealed with a cross and the inscription *In hoc signo vinces* (see CROSS), and contained an invitation to the royal wedding.

The following morning Christian put on a white linen coat, girded his loins crosswise with a broad red band and put four red roses in his hat. He made his way to the castle after an adventurous and even perilous journey. Upon arriving there he was tested in various ways and during his stay there were further ordeals. He witnessed the royal marriage and was invested with the Order of the Golden Fleece.

His curiosity led him to penetrate a secret chamber where he found Venus asleep on a bed and the King's secret books of wisdom. His indiscretion was punished: he was made to remain when the others left and was given the task of guarding the castle gate.


1604

Robert Fludd and the Rosicrucians

Who were the representatives of this elect school in the days of Robert Fludd? They were the Brethren of the Rosy Cross, whom he proceeds to address at length: (1) As a result of close investigation, he has been led to the conclusion that they are illuminated truly by the Spirit and that to them are unfolded those things which the sacred texts have foreshewn mystically as preceding the end of the world. (2) They have been endowed with spiritual virtue and the higher Divine Grace. (3) If their deeds correspond to their words – and he can doubt no longer that they do – that which they prophesy on their own part must be accepted in faith, more especially as it is in perfect harmony with the sacred source of truth. (4) By an attentive study of their writings he has found that they act under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit. (5) They have knowledge of the true mystery and of that key which leads to the joy of Paradise. (6) They have therefore the freedom of Paradise, even as Elias of old. (7) To them it is no cause of pride that they are able to make gold, but they rejoice when the heavens open and at the sight of their names written in the Book of Life. (8) Transferring the appeal to those whose minds are obscured by a cloud of ignorance, Robert Fludd invites mankind at large to agree with him that the Brethren of the Rosy Cross are guided by the Spirit of God, that their asylum – the House of the Holy Spirit – is situated at the world's end, and is there encompassed by clouds, or that it is on the apex of a high mountain and that those who dwell therein breathe in the sweet and rarefied air of the Psyche, or the life of true wisdom.

A.E. Waite *The Brotherhood of the Holy Cross*

At this point the story ends, rather abruptly. Apart from its highly imaginative story, one of the most interesting features of the 'Hermetick Romance' is its obscurity. The book's hidden author introduced countless elements from his own obviously wide knowledge of the old hermetic tradition, cosmological, alchemical, astrological and magical symbolism, mythology and so on. Indeed, the text is full of what might be called Jungian 'archetypes' and the whole story rather resembles a dream.

Puzzling Purpose

The problem of the authorship of the three tracts described above did not begin to attract the attention of modern scholarship until about 80 years ago and then, as might be expected, in Germany.

It has been established that the author of the *Chymische Hochzeit* was Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654), a young man when he published the book. Later he became a well-known Wurttemburg theologian whose pedagogic and pastoral writings were highly esteemed. Towards the end of his life he admitted that he had written *The Hermetick Romance* and, with evident embarrassment, tried to convey the impression that the book was a youthful folly. It is likely that he was also the author of the *Fama* and *Confessio*.

One thing is certain, that all three books originated in a small circle that was close to Christoph Besold (1577-1638), professor of law at the university of Tübingen. Andreae was both his pupil and his close friend. Besold's learning was immense: he had a detailed knowledge of Islamic culture and philosophy, could read Arabic and Hebrew, and at the same time knew the works of all the great humanists and Neoplatonists of the more recent Renaissance period. German scholars have pointed to Besold's influence in relation to the texts of the *Fama* and the *Chymische Hochzeit*.

While there is no quarrel about Andreae's literary and intellectual sources, there has been much argument about his intentions. Is he to be considered a satirist, a moralist, a social reformer or perhaps a Pansophist, that is, a white magician? The latter, for example, was the view held by the late W. E. Peuckert, the distinguished Göttingen historian who specialized in the byways of cultural history.

If a synthesis of a variety of views be at all possible, then Andreae could perhaps be described as a Neoplatonist, hence preoccupied with the old hermetic tradition, but at the same time as a devout Lutheran. In any event the three 'Rosicrucian' books represent an attack on the false claims of the vulgar alchemists and their occult pretensions. Again, however obscurely Andreae's intentions are expressed, they appear to reflect the views of a social reformer and an attempt to reconcile ancient beliefs, for example, true or 'symbolical' alchemy, with pietistic Christianity.

In the circles that provided a reading public for these books, during the period 1614-c1620, their effect was nothing less than sensational. There were, of course, many who wished to join the Rosicrucian brotherhood. Unable to identify a single person who belonged to it, let alone the slightest clue that would reveal where its 'headquarters' might be found, they printed pamphlets, mostly in the shape of letters, which, it was hoped, would eventually find their way to someone 'in authority'. Some of these announced that their respective writers were already members of the fraternity. This secondary Rosicrucian literature is very extensive.

Next there were those who did not claim any personal connection with the fraternity but nevertheless enthusiastically defended its aims, in so far as these were understood. Among them, for example, was the English alchemical writer Robert Fludd (see FLUDD). Descartes, the French philosopher, who was in Germany in 1619, did his best to find a genuine Rosicrucian but failed, and hence adopted a sceptical attitude.

About 1620 interest in the Rosicrucian 'phenomenon' began to decline in Germany and the movement, if it can be described as such, began to go underground. If these strange stories were remembered at all, then it was only by those who were still preoccupied with alchemy. In German occult circles there was a lively concern with alchemy until the end of the 18th century.

In 1710 something came to life which vaguely depended upon the Rosicrucian legend. It was in fact pre-Masonic but its name was later inherited by a German Masonic group. This was the Order of the Gold and Rosy Cross, the invention of Sigmund Richter, who called himself Sincerus Renatus, and who published at Breslau a tract with the title *The Perfect and True Perfection of the Philosopher's Stone by the Brotherhood of the Gold and Rosy Cross*. The order was supposed to be divided into two branches, the Rosy Cross and the Golden Cross, with a total membership of 63 Adepti. It was essentially an alchemical fraternity. If it ever existed, except in Richter's imagination, it soon disappeared without trace.

From this time onwards all the groups, fraternities and associations that have incorporated such words as Rosicrucian, Rozenkreuz or Rosenkreuzer, Rose Cross, Rosy Cross, Rose-Croix and so on, in their titles have, with one exception, completely ignored the alleged erstwhile existence of Christian Rosenkreuz and his order. The story had been forgotten and the name alone survived.

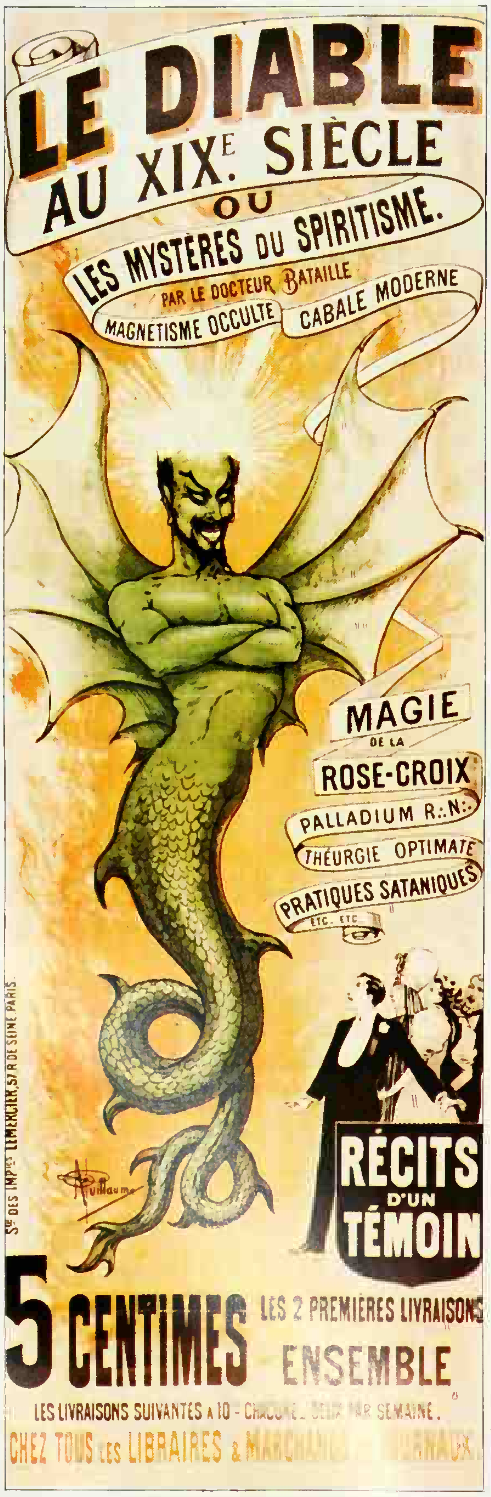
Links with Freemasonry

The name, but nothing of the legend, appears in an interesting German Masonic rite that enjoyed a certain success in the 1770s. This was the Gold und Rosenkreuzer Orden (Gold and Rosicrucian or Rose Cross Order), which attracted the support of alchemists and occultists. In many respects it was a racket and its founders were not untypical of the strange people who invented elaborate Masonic 'systems' during the last half of the 18th century.

An echo of something vaguely Rosicrucian has been a feature of Freemasonry's so-called High Degrees since the 1750s. The Rose Croix degree, now the 18th in the Ancient and Accepted Rite, made its first appearance in France c 1754. However, the available information suggests that this degree has never included any feature derived from the original Rosicrucian legend. Indeed, the only fraternity which actually revived and, indeed, 're-lived' the legend in its rituals was the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, most renowned magical society of modern times. The Golden Dawn, however, was not in any sense Masonic, although its founders were enthusiastic Freemasons (see GOLDEN DAWN).

The tomb of Christian Rosenkreuz is shown as the Mountain of the Philosophers, a symbol of the alchemical process of self-perfection, in this 18th-century illustration

The dramatic moment in Mathers's initiation ritual came when the candidate discovered the body of Christian Rosenkreuz lying motionless in the coffin


LE DIABLE
AU XIXE. SIÈCLE
OU
LES MYSTÈRES DU SPIRITISME.
PAR LE DOCTEUR BATAILLE
MAGNETISME OCCULTE
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DE LA
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Guillaume

Chris Barker

The variety of ideas and traditions sometimes associated with the Rosicrucians is suggested by this advertisement for a book on *The Devil in the 19th Century*, purporting to deal with modern Cabala, occult magnetism, theurgy and Satanism, as well as Rosicrucian magic

The Golden Dawn

Founded in 1887, this esoteric society was a by-product of the Rosicrucian Society in England, also known as the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia (abbreviated as Soc. Ros.). This was established in 1866 by a group of Freemasons who were primarily interested in occultism, Spiritualism and to a lesser extent Masonic symbolism. By the early 1880s, however, its leading members were more concerned with the study of the Cabala, alchemical symbolism and traditional occultism. The Soc. Ros. was not a Masonic Lodge but merely a society in which membership was restricted to Freemasons. Its early *Transactions* indicate a complete lack of curiosity on the subject of 17th-century Rosicrucianism.

Two of the Golden Dawn's initial three Chiefs (the order had a tripartite headship in those days) were Dr William Wynn Westcott, a London coroner, and S.L. MacGregor Mathers, reputedly a learned Cabalist and occultist.

The concept that the Golden Dawn was in some way 'Rosicrucian' was probably Westcott's. It took its grade system, via the Soc. Ros., from the 18th century German Gold- und Rosenkreuzer order. Hence the grade names were at the very best no more than pseudo-Rosicrucian. Westcott claimed – in fact there is every reason to believe that he faked – a connection between the Golden Dawn and a contemporary German occult order that called itself the Rose of Ruby and Cross of Gold (Ordo Roseae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis, abbreviated as R.R. et A.C.). However, this German order probably existed only in Westcott's imagination.

It was Mathers who brought a real echo of the old Rosicrucian legend into the Golden Dawn. He achieved this by assuming the headship of his own R.R. et A.C., for which the original Golden Dawn merely represented a probationary stage after about 1892. Mathers wrote a ritual for the initiation ceremony which incorporated one of the main features of the original legend, namely Christian Rosenkreuz's vault or tomb. This entailed the physical reconstruction of the vault itself. Where the details published in the *Fama* were not clear, Mathers used his own lively imagination.

The seven-sided vault, which was large enough to contain three people, not to mention a portable altar and a coffin, was decorated with an elaborate multi-colour 'occult' colour scheme. There was also a lot of complicated symbolical decoration, once again in colours having an occult significance. The amount of time and ingenuity expended on designing and building the Golden Dawn's first vault must indeed have been immense.

The dramatic moment in Mathers's ritual came when the candidate discovered the body of Christian Rosenkreuz – impersonated by Mathers or Westcott – lying motionless in the coffin. Now, while much of what was sonorously declaimed in this ritual might appear to represent nothing more than inspired nonsense, the ritual's overall conception indicates a very good grasp of 'theatrical effect'. Hence any candidate who was in a sufficiently receptive state of mind would be deeply impressed. For members of the R.R. et A.C. this initiation ritual could be the prelude to an exacting course in theoretical and even practical magic.

I do not believe that, for Mathers, Christian Rosenkreuz ever represented more than a convenient peg upon which to hang a complicated and certainly dramatic ritual. However, for Dr R.W. Felkin, head of the Stella Matutina, one of the Golden Dawn's successor orders after the original order had more or less collapsed in 1903, 'Our Father Christian Rosenkreuz' appears to have assumed an almost divine status. Again, while the story of the discovery of the vault, as told in the *Fama*, was clearly a fairy story, Dr Felkin actually believed that the tomb still existed somewhere in southern Germany and was on his way to search for it when war broke out in 1914 .

Ripples From the Rosy Cross

Contemporaneous with the Golden Dawn in England there were a number of 'Rosicrucian' manifestations in France during the 1890s. They were Rosicrucian only in name: for example, Stanislas de Guaita's Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix and Josephin Péladan's schismatic Catholic Rose-Croix Order. These were mainly the 'inventions' of occultists.

There was also a pseudo-Rosicrucian revival in Germany at that time. Dr Franz Hartmann, a Theosophist who had been close to Madame Blavatsky, was head of an order that called itself Rosicrucian. Rather later Dr Rudolph Steiner (see STEINER), the General Secretary of the German section of the Theosophical Society and, after 1912, the founder of the far more influential Anthroposophical Society, talked endlessly, though vaguely, about Rosicrucianism, as if it were something he had invented himself.

As might be expected, popular forms of pseudo-Rosicrucianism have flourished in the United States. I hesitate to discuss their recent ramifications because it is so difficult to separate fact from fiction. Any reader sufficiently interested is referred to the two enormous volumes of Dr R. Swinburne Clymer's *The Rosicrucian Fraternity in America: Authentic and Spurious Organizations*, which contain copious details of his feud with H. Spencer Lewis, the founder of the Ancient and Mystic Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC), the organization which has advertised its esoteric wares for many years.

The most surprising feature of all is the link, however tenuous, between Dr Clymer and others and the obscure young man called Johann Valentin Andreae who created the Rosicrucian legend at Tübingen more than three and a half centuries ago. Nobody except a few scholars, mostly in Germany, is now greatly interested in Andreae and his three books. So far as the survival of the legend is concerned they might never have been written. All that remains is the variety of speculative meanings attributed to two words: 'Rosy Cross'.

ELLIC HOWE

FURTHER READING: P.M. Allen, ed., *Christian Rosenkreutz Anthology* (Steinerbooks, 1974); R. Swinburne Clymer, *The Rosicrucian Fraternity in America* (Rosicrucian Foundation, Quakerstown, Pennsylvania, 1935); H.S. Lewis, *Rosicrucian History with Complete Questions and Answers*, 15th ed. (AMORC/Rosicrucians, 1981); C. McIntosh, *The Rosy Cross Unveiled* (Aquarian Press, 1980); A.E. Waite, *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross* (University Books, reprint 1970); Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (Routledge, 1972).

ROWAN

THE MOUNTAIN ASH or rowan, *Sorbus aucuparia*, is among the plants most positively protective against witchcraft and evil, especially in the temperate countries of the North, where it is most abundant. It is reputed to have been one of the sacred trees of the Druids, because it is so often found in and near ancient stone circles. It appears earliest in Scandinavian myth, where it was called Thor's Helper, since it once assisted him to cross a difficult river. The wood of this tree was used in the construction of Viking ships, to protect them from Ran, the enemy of seamen. A similar belief in the protective power of the rowan was held in Britain, and there is a reference in the ballad of 'The Laidley Worm of Spindleston Heughs' to the Child of Wynd's ship having a mast of rowan so that the evil queen's witch hags could not harm it:

The hags came back, finding their charms
Most powerfully withstood;
For warlocks, witches, cannot work
Where there is rowan-tree wood.

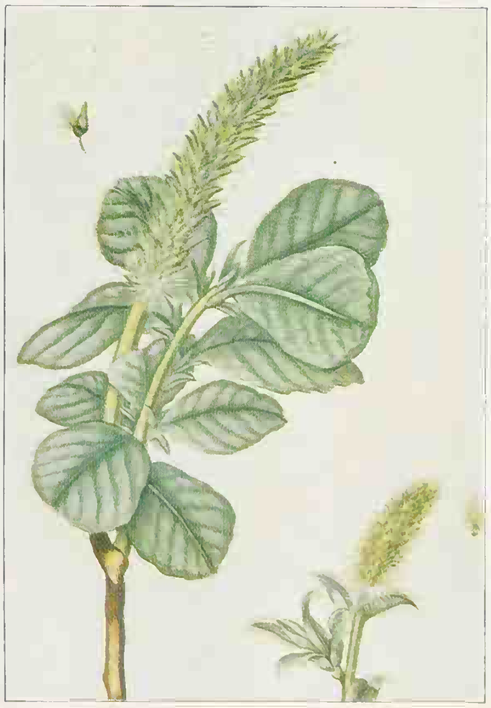
There was apparently no situation in which a piece of rowan was not efficacious in keeping away witches. In Scotland a twig was often carried in the pocket. If a person was suspected of being a witch, touching them with a rowan branch would ensure their being carried off by the Devil.

Many other protective measures against witches involved the use of rowan. Branches of the tree were placed by house doors, used as walking sticks and often placed in cow byres and stables. Milking pails and churns might be decorated with, or even entirely made of, the wood. To prevent witches stealing milk without coming near the cow – as they were wont to do by making the appropriate actions in their own homes, or by taking the form of hares and sucking the milk direct from the cow in the field – a horsehair rope with a twig of rowan in it would be tied round the animal's feet.

A cross made of rowan twigs, a combination of pagan and Christian symbols, might be used over cow stalls and also placed over a cradle during the dangerous period between birth and baptism, when infants were most liable to enchantment. In some cases rowan and birch were used together to form a cross. It is recorded how a century ago such crosses were placed over every cottage door, every pig-sty, every seed-bed in Herefordshire, usually on May morning. Sometimes country people wore a necklace made of the red berries, the colour red being supposed to have protective powers against evil (see RED). Rowan berries might also be fed to mares in foal and cows in calf to ensure straightforward births. It was believed that pigs fed with the berries would fatten rapidly.

In Wales, it was believed that the mountain ash had furnished the Holy Cross, and for this reason it was widely planted in cemeteries. The 17th-century diarist John Evelyn wrote, 'this tree is reputed so sacred that there is not a churchyard without one of them planted in it... on a certain day in the year, everyone religiously wears a cross of the wood'. Apart from restraining evil, rowan planted among the graves kept the dead from rising prematurely.

'This tree is reputed so sacred that there is not a churchyard without one of them planted in it': rowan, or mountain ash



Royal Botanical Gardens

The Scots often used the timber for the crossbeam of the chimney, and it was equally used in the making of water-mills and farm implements. In Lincolnshire, rowan twigs pushed into thatch and into haystacks were supposed to prevent fire. Both hearths and wells might have rowan placed round them. In general, a rowan tree near a house was thought lucky and protective; to cut it down brought misfortune.

In some areas a day known as Rowan Tree Day, or Rowan-Tree Witch Day, was celebrated at the beginning of May, at the time of the old Beltane festival. On that day the branches of rowan needed for protective purposes were brought home. To be really effective, they had to be taken from a mountain ash which the person concerned had neither seen nor heard of previously, and had to be brought home by a different route from the outward one. It was worth the trouble, however, because the rowan so gathered afforded every building and its inmates protection for a year. After fastening the twigs in all the appropriate places, bonfires would be lit.

Rowan was often used instead of hazel for water divining and tracing hidden treasure. In folk medicine whooping cough and other ailments could be cured by pushing some of the sufferer's hair into a cut in a mountain ash trunk, and the berries were prized to ease childbirth. Among the many alternative names of this tree are Quick Beam and Quicken, similar names occurring in some Germanic languages. 'Quick' is used in the sense of living, and we can therefore presume it was originally a tree deity. This is shown in Irish folklore, and in the story of Diarmuid and Grania the tree's fairy guardian is described – with crooked teeth, large nose, black face and one red eye. Although he has sought the guardian's permission to shelter in the wood, Diarmuid kills him in order to acquire the magic berries which had the power of restoring anyone who ate them to the age of 30.

Rowan also has such alternative names as Witchwood, Witch-Wicken, Witchen, Whitty and Wicken. Although probably originating from the Old English *wice*, meaning a tree with pliable branches, the 'witch' meaning seems to have taken over. In the Victorian language of flowers, rowan stands for prudence.

A.J. HUXLEY

Founder of the Mevlevi order of dervishes, with its characteristic whirling dance, the Persian mystical poet Rumi wrote of the return to God through love and the renunciation of worldly distractions

JALALU'D-DIN RUMI

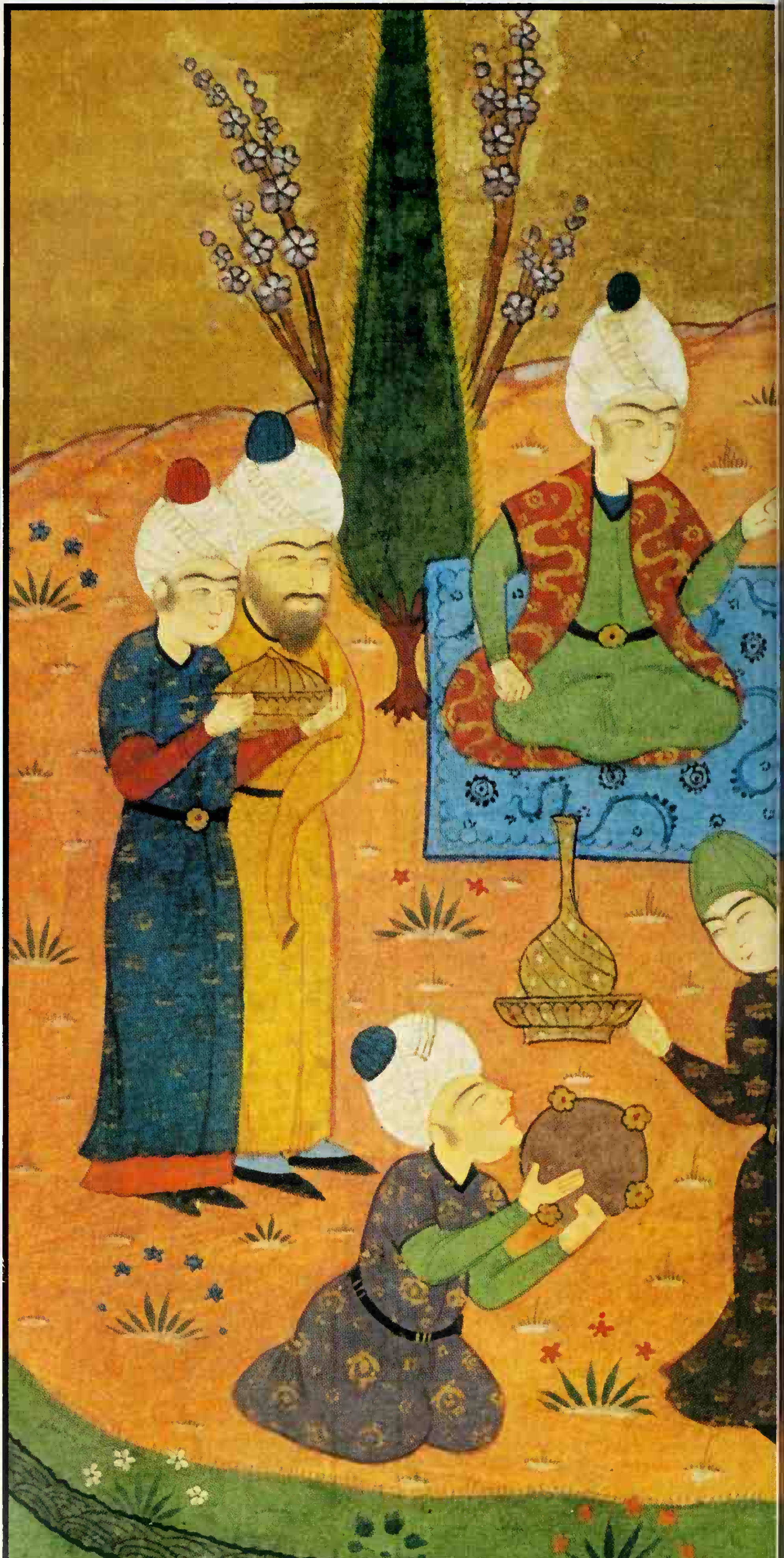
ONE OF THE WORLD'S greatest mystical poems, called the *Masnavi* from the name of the type of rhyming couplets in the Persian language in which the poem is written, was composed by Jalalu'd-Din Rumi, who was born in 1207 and died in 1273. He also left posterity a large collection of exquisite lyrics – *ghazals* – whose burden is the expression of profound yearning for union with God, as the source of all being and centre of the only true perfection. This union is the goal of the Mohammedan mystic, known as a Sufi from the Arabic word *suf,* wool, the material of the Sufi's coarse distinguishing mantle (see SUFIS).

In the lyrical poems, the emphasis is on love and the sorrow of the lover separated from the beloved. This love must fill the heart of the seeker for God before the separated wanderer is in a condition to begin his quest for reunion with the Perfect Divine Truth, of which creation is but a refracted, imperfect reflection. According to Rumi's teaching, only through love can the heart become cleansed, to reflect the Divine Reality and so fulfil the purpose of creation. For according to Mohammedan tradition, God made the world because he was 'a hidden treasure' which desired to be known; he created creation that he might be known. In order that a man might become the vehicle of this perfect knowledge of God, he must purge himself of all worldly attachment and, essentially, of attachment to the self. Sufi teaching is, therefore, the ultimate exaltation, into the way of complete spirituality, complete renunciation of the shadows of material existence, of the central Mohammedan doctrine that God alone is to be adored as the One, no idols or images being in anywise associated with him. The self might become such an idolatrous object of worship if we were to give way to egotistical desires and preoccupations. The Sufi's first duty is to quell such selfish tendencies.

The Perfect Man

The core of Rumi's message is contained in the story in the *Masnavi* of the man who knocked at the Friend's door. The Friend asked who was there. He replied, 'I'. The Friend told him to go away – 'it is not the time yet: at such a feast as mine there is no place for the unprepared'. The unprepared one wandered a year in the sufferings of the wastes of separation. Then he returned, nervously, lest he should again say the wrong thing, to knock once more at the Friend's door. When the Friend called, 'Who is that at the door?,' he replied, 'At the door it is you, oh snatcher of hearts'. The Friend said, 'Now, since you are I, enter, oh myself: there is no room in this mansion for two I's'.

The seeker, he who strives to reach the



door of the mansion of God, is seen as a wayfarer, and one who needs a guide for the arduous road through worldly distractions and the rigours of self-conquest, towards the clarity of the radiance of the Truth. Rumi's first guide had, as was requisite, the attributes of the 'perfect man': one who has traversed each difficult stage of the Way, and who can return from the quest accomplished, to find among his fellow-men someone who possesses the readiness to be inspired by such a catalytic agency as the perfect man is in the Way of the Truth. Rumi possessed the readiness. A dervish (the mendicant's title which Sufi wayfarers assumed as expressive of their poverty and quest) named Shams of Tabrizi fired this readiness for the Path of Love. Previously, Rumi had been a professor of the religious sciences in the colleges of the city of Qonya in Anatolia. Shams told him to lay aside every science and prepare himself, through searching self-knowledge, for the loss of self in love: only the 'science of love' would serve.

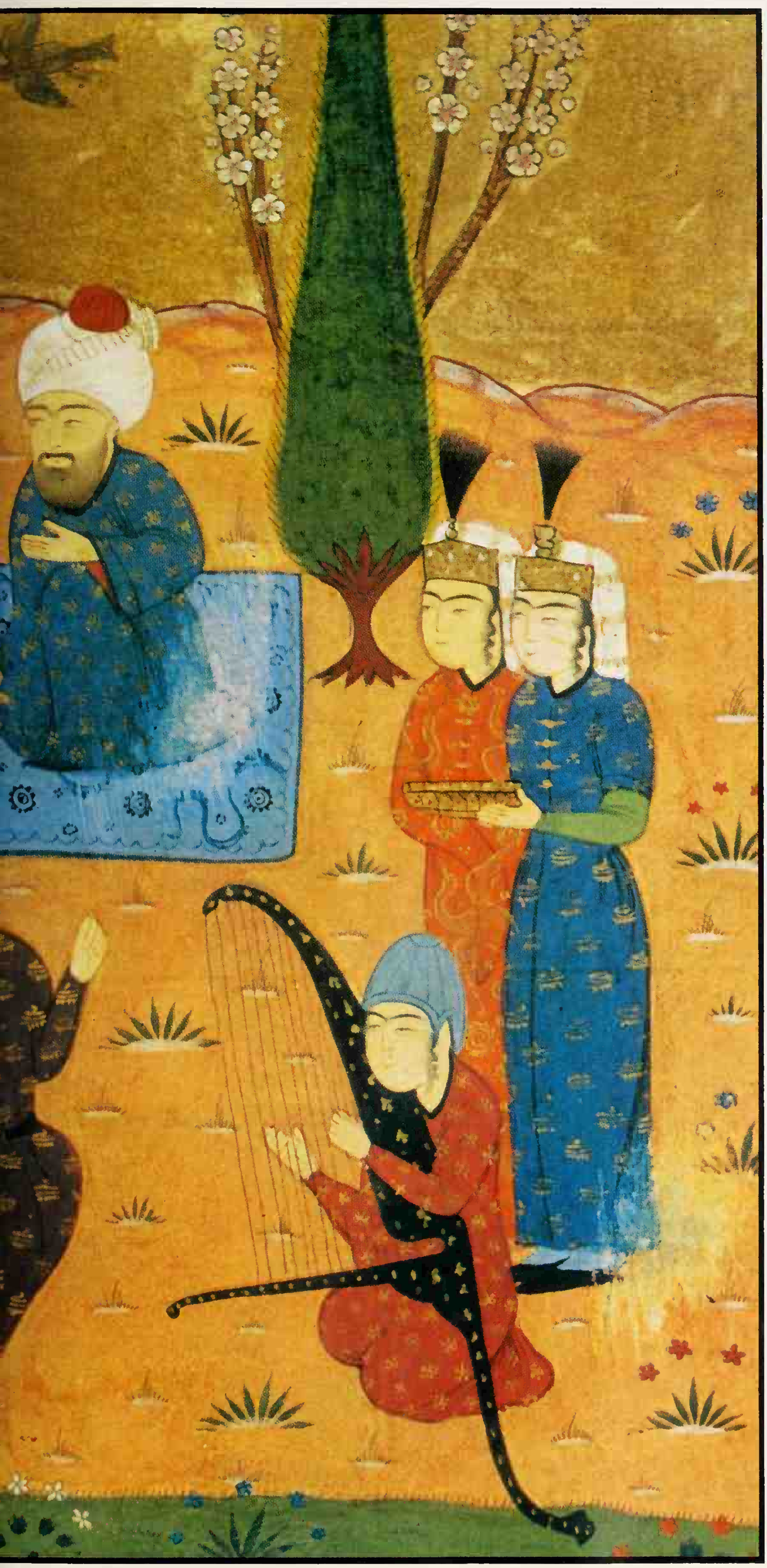
Rumi's lyrics are addressed to Shams and uttered in his name. He was parted from him in a separation that symbolized for him the separation from God, when Shams was murdered, in 1247, probably by Rumi's former pupils, jealous of their master's new obsession. Thus Rumi could say of the fugitive, ever sought-after beloved, expressing the supreme quest in the most human terms:

> Go comrades, fetch our beloved. Bring me
> a moment the runaway idol,
> With sweet songs and on various pretexts
> fetch to the house the beautiful,
> comely face.
> If he makes excuses, saying, 'I'll come
> another time',
> All the promises are false: he'll be
> deceiving you . . .

Shams wrought a deep change in Rumi, the learned theologian. He made him a poet of love, and an ecstatic mystic who founded the order of Mevlevi dervishes, named after Rumi the Maulavi (Mevlevi) or 'master'; the dervishes who, following their master's example, performed a whirling dance, in order to achieve ecstasy, death to the self (see DERVISH). Rumi describes what Shams, the 'catalyst', did to him:

> I was a devout man. You made me a singer
> of songs.
> You made me a wine-bibber, a drunkard,
> a fool.
> I was a grave man of formal praying.
> You made me the sport of the children in the
> street.

These words are no reproach. Shams had humbled the grave theologian so that he could begin to realize the purpose of his existence in cleansing the mind and heart for their sole rightful occupant, the love of God, by which man's awful separation from the Divine can alone be bridged and the



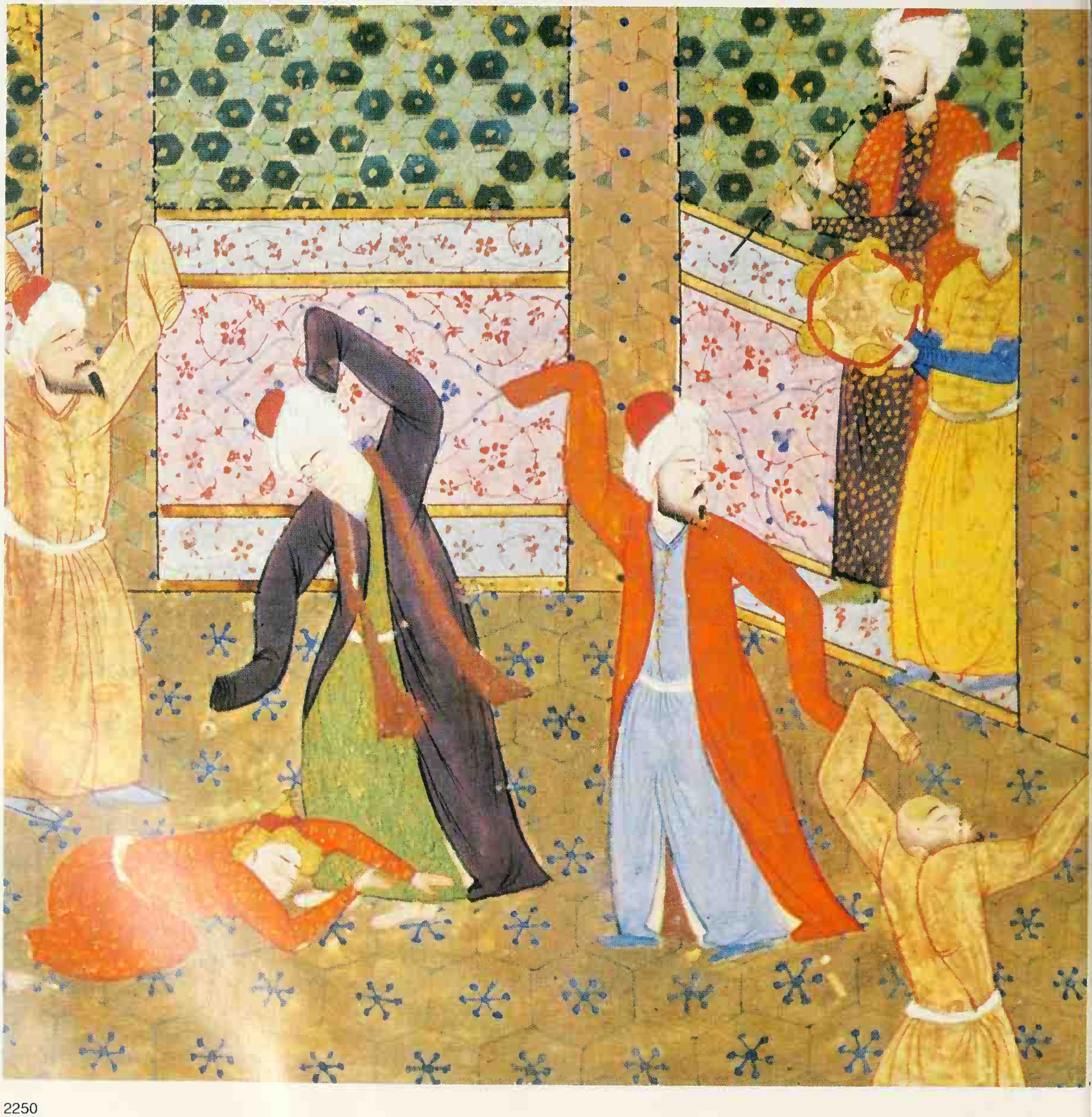
British Museum

'I was a devout man. You made me a singer of songs. You made me a wine-bibber . . .' Illustration from a late 13th century manuscript of the *Masnavi* of Jalalu'l-Din Rumi world's beguilements shed. The *Masnavi* begins with this theme of separation (in Nicholson's translation):

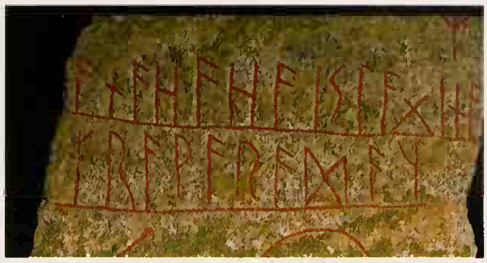
> Listen to the reed how it tells a tale,
> complaining of separations—
> Saying, 'Ever since I was parted from the
> reed bed, my lament has caused man and
> woman to moan . . .
> Everyone who is left far from his source
> wishes back the time when he was united
> with it'.

Rumi was born in Balkh, in what today is northern Afghanistan. In 1209-10, his family emigrated further west to Anatolia. Here Rumi, five at the time of the move, remained all his life, hence the name 'Rumi', which means 'westerner' or 'Roman' since Anatolia had been part of the Byzantine or East Roman Empire. His enlightenment occurred one day in the street when he was returning from giving a lecture and was accosted suddenly by the strange dervish, Shams-i-Tabrizi, who asked him what was the point of much learning. Rumi answered that it was to know the traditions of orthodox religion and the canon law. Shams replied, quoting the poet Sana'i, 'Sheer ignorance is better than learning that will not snatch you out of yourself.'

After the death of Shams he was inspired by two of the latter's successors, a goldsmith's apprentice from Qonya, Salahu'd-Din Zarkub, and Chelebi Husamu'd-Din, who inspired the *Masnavi* and outlived the master. Rumi himself died in Qonya in 1273. Rumi's own *tariqat*, way or rite, the Mevlevi order, survived in the Ottoman Empire, but was officially closed by the Turkish government in 1927. However, adherents of the aspirations and ritual of the order still exist. The tombs of Rumi and his companions and successors are grouped together at Qonya in a shrine annually visited by numbers of people, and licensed once a year to be again the scene of a revival of the ritual dancing and music characteristic of the Mevlevis.



Rumi was a poet of love and a mystic who founded the order of Mevlevi dervishes: they followed his example in performing a whirling dance to achieve ecstasy: death to the self; 17th-century Persian illustration



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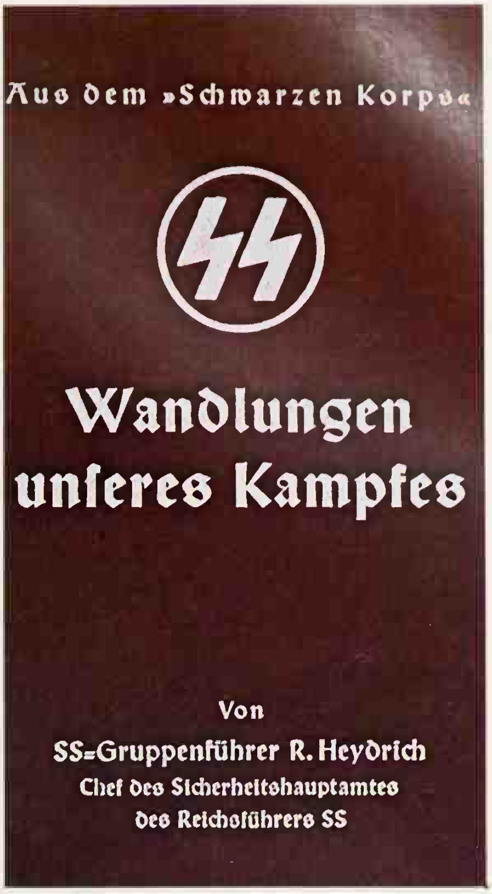


Aus dem »Schwarzen Korps«

Wandlungen
unſeres Kampfes

Von
SS=Gruppenführer R. Heydrich
Chef des Sicherheitshauptamtes
des Reichsführers SS

Wiener Library

Above **Runic alphabets continued in use in remote parts of Sweden for more than fifteen centuries: inscription carved on a stone from Mojbro, of the 7th century AD *Right* The Sig or 'S' rune became the symbol of Heinrich Himmler's SS: title page of a book by Reinhard Heydrich, 1935**

RUNES

SIGILS OF THE ANCIENT NORSE and Teutonic alphabets, runes have always been ascribed magical and divinatory properties. The word comes from the Indo-European root *ru*, signifying 'mysterious' or 'secret'.

Rock carvings that appear to be forerunners of runes, made by Germanic tribes who settled in northern Italy as far back as the Neolithic period (c 8000 BC), have been discovered, and in Sweden rune-like markings from the later Bronze Age (c 1300 BC) are widely found. Myths attribute their creation to Odin (see ODIN), and a Viking poem tells how Odin 'took up the runes, lifted them screaming, and fell back'. As an alphabet, however, the characters date from around the 3rd century AD.

Great magical significance was attached to the inscribing of runes: carved on to swords, they made them invincible in battle; on amulets and other personal items they afforded protection against sickness and sorcery. Gravestones described the valorous deeds of those who were buried beneath them, and the magic of runes was believed to deter grave robbers. Casting of the runes was a divinatory art practised by shamans in a wide variety of rites.

According to the *Germania* of Tacitus, the ancient Germans had the highest possible regard for divination and the casting of lots. A branch was broken from a fruitbearing tree and sliced into strips. These were marked with symbols and then thrown at random onto a white cloth. The seer picked up three strips at a time and read their meaning according to the runes scratched upon them. As R.W.V. Elliott remarked in *Runes: An Introduction* (1959): 'The word "rune" itself places the *futhark* [runic alphabet] at the very heart of Germanic religious cult; to this day the German *raunen* connotes "whisper" and "secret" and "mystery", associations coeval with the magic power of runic lore. Nor is evidence lacking to connect the secrets of the runes with the Germanic gods themselves.'

The name of *futhark* was given to the runic alphabet because the first six letters were f, u, th, a, r and k, and the 24 letters of the early alphabet were divided into three groups of eight, named after the Germanic deities Freyr, Heimdall and Tyr. The use of runes reached England c 450 AD, and examples have been found as late as the 14th century. Thereafter, although they survived in rural Sweden almost into modern times, they fell into disuse throughout the rest of Europe for five hundred years.

The revived study of runes became one of the unscientific preoccupations of the generation of Germanic occultists that flourished at the end of the 19th century, and particularly in the years 1900-1933. Uninterested in the classical tradition of European hermetism, they were strongly identified with the cause of German nationalism, which in their case meant mystical theories concerning the superiority of the German master race (*Herrenvolk*) and a pathological fixation upon everything that was truly German, Germanic or Nordic. Hence for them the runes had a special significance.

One of the first German occultists to attempt to explain the esoteric significance of the runes was Guido von List (see LIST), whose *The Secret of the Runes* (1908) reveals nothing except List's obsession with lunatic philological theories. Dr Bernhard Koerner, one of List's most devoted disciples, was convinced that old heraldic devices incorporated runic symbols, and wrote extensively on this theme. He was a member of the Prussian Heralds' Office, the counterpart of the British College of Heralds, and was not without distinction as a genealogist. Nevertheless, his more conventional colleagues laughed at his runic theories.

Dr Koerner was also a leading member of the Germanen Order, founded in 1912, which combined monomaniac anti-semitism with most of the other bees that inhabited the bonnets of the contemporary Germanic lunatic fringe (see GERMANEN ORDER). The 'secret chiefs' of the Order, of whom Koerner was one, habitually signed their names with runic symbols.

Hermann Pohl of Magdeburg, the Order's first Chancellor (Secretary General), was yet another runic enthusiast. During the First World War he sold bronze finger-rings engraved with a runic inscription to such members of the Order as were willing to buy them. He claimed that the rings possessed certain magical qualities and would protect the wearer from harm and ill-health. At the end of 1915 Pohl was ejected from the Order and proceeded to found a rival and schismatic German Order Walvater of the Holy Grail, whose title alone represented a strange mixture of pagan and Christian allusion. This Order used runic symbols on its stationery and from January 1918 published a weekly periodical called *Runen*.

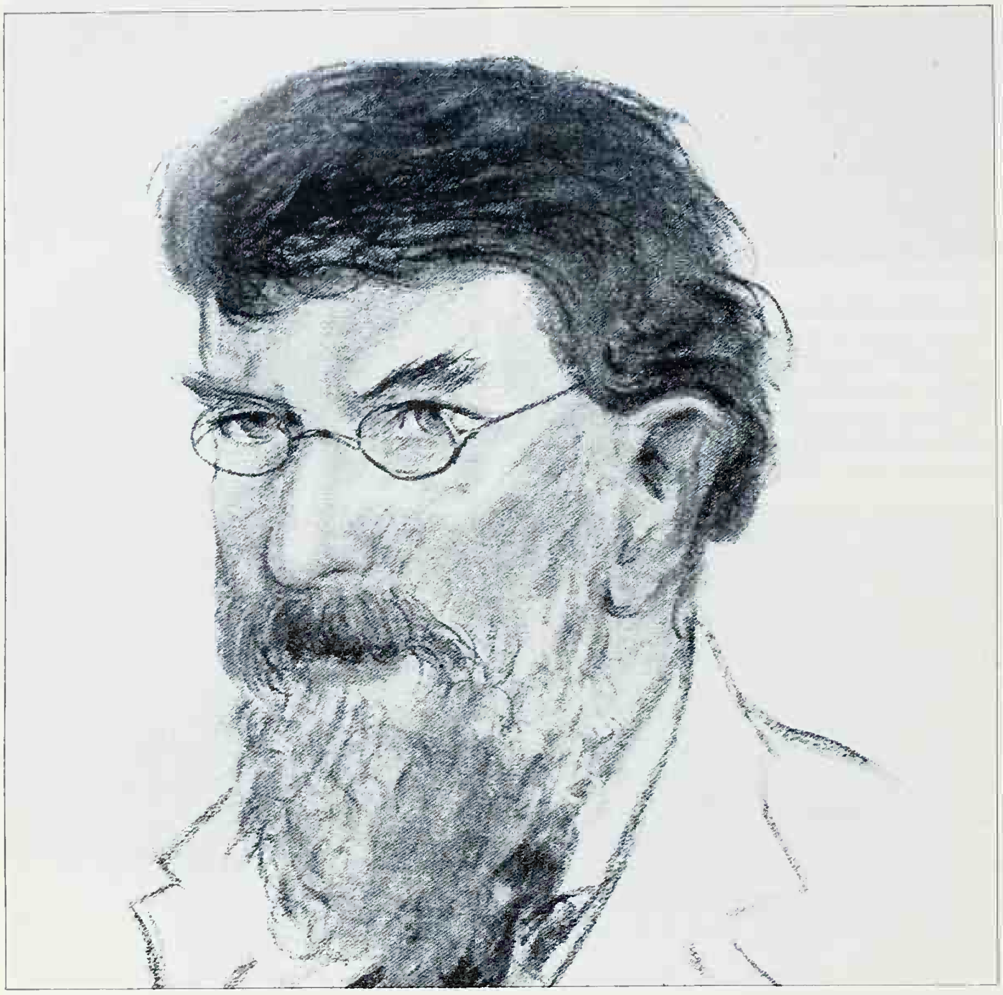
Siegfried Adolf Kummer of Dresden, the author of *Heilige Runenmacht* ('Holy Rune Power') (1932), was typical of the crazier German runic occultists. Kummer had invented a runic equivalent to yoga exercises, in which the postures were supposed to correspond to the shapes of runic letters. He recommended his pupils to yodel at the same time as they performed their exercises since this produced 'strong magical forces'.

Another of his theories was that intense meditation upon an appropriate rune could heal a sick person at a distance. In the same way that the astrologers equate each of the 12 signs of the zodiac with an area of the human anatomy, Kummer claimed to have discovered the corresponding runic affinities. The 'Fa' rune, for instance, was associated with headaches and fevers, while for throat liver and nervous afflictions concentration upon the 'Ur' rune was said to be efficacious.

Kummer was the President of the Association of Invisible Aryans, the members of which were admonished to 'strive for the blood interests of our aryan-Germanic race'. On the 13th day of every month at precisely 1 pm, Kummer 'struck the Hagal rune' and transmitted positive thoughts to his followers. In 1927 Kummer founded the Rune School 'Runa', which provided instruction in Aryan wisdom, runic lore and astrology.

A somewhat similar organization was currently conducted by Friedrich Bernhard Marby of Stuttgart, the President of the Association for Rune Research, who taught a system of 'runic gymnastics'. It never occurred to von List, Koerner, Pohl, Kummer, Marby and all the other runic enthusiasts that one particular rume, the Sig or 'S' rune, would become both familiar and detested by many outside Germany. It was the emblem that signified Heinrich Himmler's 'Schutzstaffel' or SS.

The use of runes as a divinatory aid had a popular revival during the 1980s. Small tiles or wooden pieces were marked with the runic symbols: they could be drawn from a bag and used as the focus for meditation; they could be cast in lots, as with the sticks or coins of the *I Ching* (see I CHING); or they could be laid out in a significant pattern like Tarot cards (see TAROT). Their interpretation was necessarily arbitrary, however.



Mary Evans Picture Library

While still a boy, this Irish poet, painter and writer, better known as 'A.E.', became aware of 'a mysterious life quickening within mine... a being stained with the dust of travel, having myriads of memories and a sacred wisdom'; throughout his involvement in diverse causes, such 'moments of illumination' remained with him to the end

G.W.RUSSELL

'I MOVED among men and places and in living I learned the truth at last. I know I am a spirit and that I went forth in old time from the Self-Ancestral to labours yet unaccomplished; but filled ever and again with homesickness I made these songs by the way.' In this excerpt from the preface to his first book, *Homeward Songs by the Way*, lies a clue to the man whom the world knew as 'A.E.' He had signed the book 'Aeon', a word that had come to him unbidden. When he later discovered its occult meaning – Aeon, a rebellious angel, or the divergence of the soul from God and its journey through successive incarnations back to its source – he found in it confirmation of his own meaning. But since the printer had deciphered it as A.E., he accepted the letters as a name.

Born in 1867, in Northern Ireland, of evangelical parents who moved to Dublin when he was 11, he decided at an early age to think out Protestantism for himself and decided that he would have 'to defy a God who threatened me for doing things which I had never promised not to do'. He says in *The Candle of Vision*: 'I was about sixteen when I became aware of a mysterious life quickening within mine. It was no angelic thing but a being stained with the dust of travel, having myriads of memories and a sacred wisdom.' Thus he discovered in himself the visionary pilgrim, and it was as a pilgrim that he went through life, travelling light, indifferent to poverty, indifferent to fame except insofar as it meant the achievement of something he had set himself to do.

'A Besetting Temptation'

A.E. attended the Dublin Art School for a short time, and there met the fellow student who was to become a lifelong associate – W. B. Yeats. It is said that when his instructors discerned in him a great artist in the making, A.E. rejected further teaching as a 'besetting temptation'. He continued, however, to paint in his own way and many of his pictures hang in public galleries and private collections.

'I went into an office and wrote poetry. Then because I wrote good poetry I was sent out over the country to organise farmers.' (With Sir Horace Plunket he founded the Irish Agricultural Organization Society.) 'When I wrote articles about farmers I was taken from organising and put to editing an agricultural paper' (*The Irish Homestead*). 'And having learned to do this I was dragged into politics.' (When the new government was being shaped after the 'Troubles', he was invited, along with Yeats, who accepted, to become a senator. A.E. consulted his gods and refused; he would watch and admonish from the sidelines.) 'And now I edit a weekly review (*The Irish Statesman*) dealing with politics, literature and economics.'

A.E.'s life, like his writing, can be roughly divided into three periods: the earliest predominantly mystical, when according to what he called 'the law of spiritual gravitation' lifelong friends began to appear; the middle, when he was at once the propagandist of co-operative farming, a pillar of the Irish Renaissance and an assistant with Yeats, Synge and Lady Gregory, at the birth of the Abbey Theatre, and the third when his editing of *The Irish Statesman* effected a second literary revival in which A.E. was as much the central figure as Yeats had been of the first.

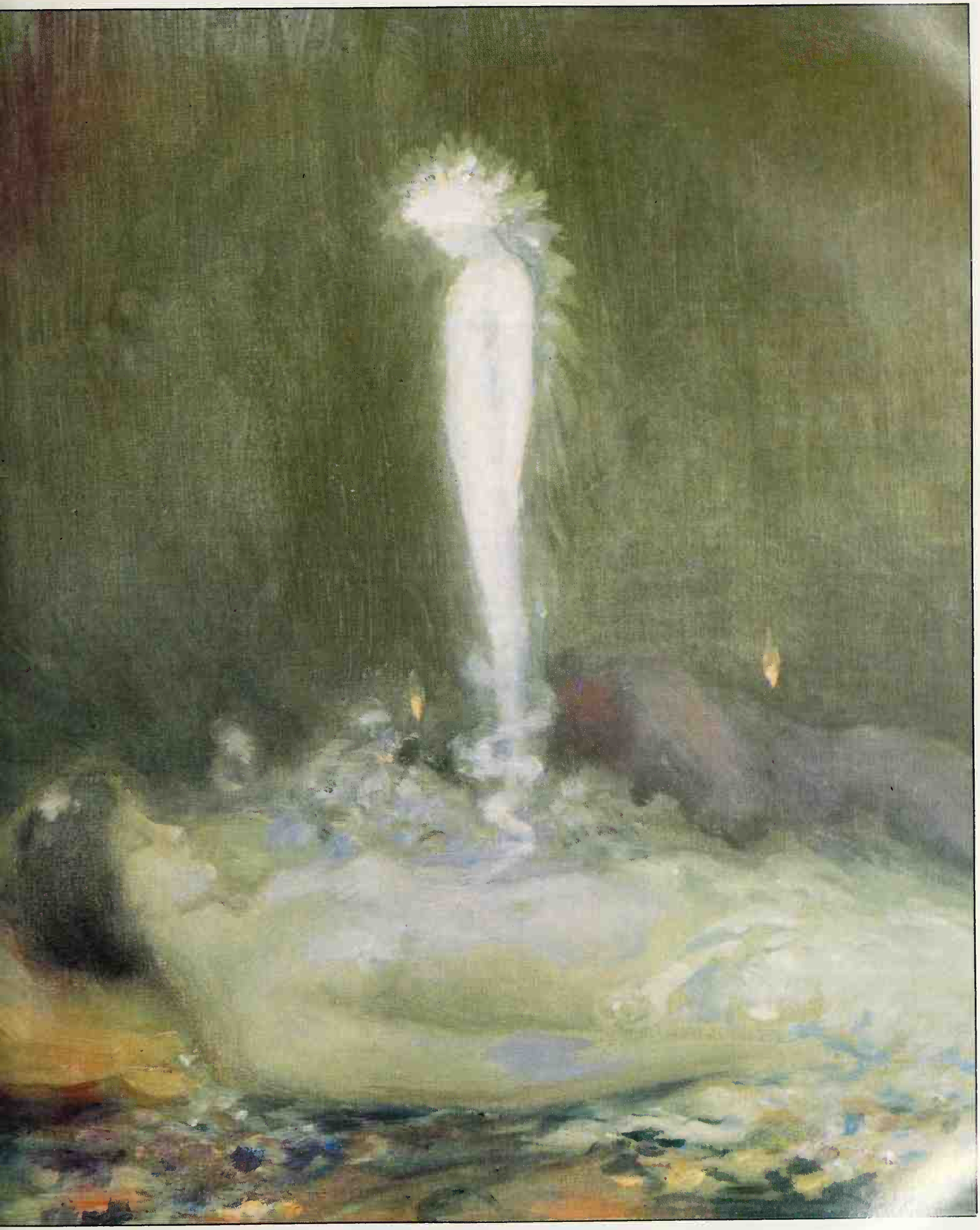
George Moore, in his trilogy *Ave Salve Vale*, hunting for the adjective for A.E. at this period, called him 'maieutic' – bringing to birth, delivering – a term also applied to Socrates for his ability, shared by A.E., to deliver men of their own widsom.

It is not easy to assess just how much A.E. owed to Theosophy (see THEOSOPHY). John Eglinton in his *Memoir* of A.E. wrote: 'A.E.'s debt to Theosophy was, in fact, something like that of Blake to Swedenborg. From the first he understood it in a way of his own and in *The Candle of Vision* and *Song and its Fountains* seems at least as much concerned in making a contribution to literature as to Theosophic thought.' A.E. himself, in a late letter, said 'I had a natural mysticism of my own before I knew the Indian seers'. He never failed, however, to acknowledge his debt to those who had turned his attention to the classical Sanskrit writer Patanjali, and the *Upanishads* and his copy of the *Bhagavad Gita* was always in his pocket, heavily underscored and annotated.

He left the Theosophical Society in 1898 to found the Hermetic Society, where, it has been said, he was careful to discourage students from dabbling in the occult but insisted on the paramount need for the practice of meditation. Throughout his life he constantly reverted to the ancient teaching that every ascent of the soul implies the necessity of a corresponding descent, and John Eglinton refers to 'his moments of illumination alternating with disconcerting avowals of doubt'.

But A.E. was resilient. And his outer serenity, as private man and public figure, was the fruit of this inward struggle to reconcile the opposites in himself. His last years were spent away from his own country. After the death of his wife and the cessation of *The Irish Statesman*, A.E. made two lecture tours to the United States, receiving honorary doctorates from Harvard and Yale, and from there returned to England to write what were to be his last poems and the prose work *The Avatars*.

As far back as 1896, with Yeats, he had confidently expected the arrival of an Avatar, or incarnation of deity, who was to bring about a new development in human consciousness: A.E. had seen this in one of his visions. But, by the time the book came to be written, another Ireland had come into being; the heroic images were forgotten. He died in 1935. P. TRAVERS*



Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin

'He discovered in himself the visionary pilgrim, and it was as a pilgrim that he went through life, travelling light' ***Above left*** **Portrait of A.E., by Kathleen Shackleton** ***Above*** **One of A.E.'s paintings,** ***Is this not Great Babylon that I have built?***

The existence and nature of the witches' sabbath has been hotly disputed, and one celebrated theory regards it as the survival of a pagan cult. But who really was 'the god of the witches'?

SABBATH

IN GOETHE'S *Faust*, Mephistopheles takes Faust to the witches' sabbath on the Brocken, a peak of sinister reputation in the Harz Moutains which was traditionally the place where all the witches of Germany gathered to hold high revel on Walpurgis Night. The pair struggle up into the hills, with Mephistopheles suggesting that they would be better off equipped with a broomstick or a he-goat to fly on. The wind raves and hisses round the rocks and trees, through the clefts and chasms there gleams a dull red light, and they hear the cries of the witches hurrying through the storm-tossed air to the summit, where they dance to the point of madness in sensuous riot.

Goethe did not take the witches' sabbath very seriously, and on their way up the mountain Faust and Mephistopheles agree that they have entered a world of enchantment, of dream. There is, in fact, a dream-like air about some of the accounts of the sabbath which were extorted from accused witches.

Witch-hunters themselves were struck by this and Nicolas Remy, who hunted down hundreds of unfortunates in Lorraine in the 1580s, said that he was quite willing to agree with those who thought that the witches' meetings sometimes existed only in their dreams. He quoted a witch named Catherine Prevotte as saying that 'sometimes witches are fully awake and actually present at these assemblies; but that often they are merely visited in their sleep by an empty and vain imagination' – though he went on to make it clear that in either case witches were equally the confederates of the demons.

Besides the Brocken, there were other places in Europe where witches were believed to gather like evil shapes in a nightmare: the Blocula in Sweden, a place in the mountain range of Amboto in the Basque country, or the famous walnut tree of Benevento in Italy. The picture of a huge gathering of hags and wizards where every animal passion was let loose by the light of black candles and smoking torches, with the great black goat looming darkly on his evil throne, obviously owes a good deal to over-excited human fantasy. The real sabbath, if it existed at all, must have been far smaller in scale and altogether less romantically sinister.

Whether there ever was such a thing as the witches' sabbath is crucial to the whole question of the existence of witchcraft as an organized movement or cult, as distinct from the activities of individual witches, charmers and magicians, acting alone. The evidence is unsatisfactory and incomplete but, putting it cautiously, it seems quite possible that groups of witches did exist, if only in small numbers, and that they met regularly for organized ceremonies. At all events, it was most certainly believed that they did.

Straws in the Wind

The name 'sabbath' seems to have been applied to the witches' meetings through association with another fiercely hated and persecuted group, the Jews, for in the early accounts the meeting is frequently called the 'synagogue'. (The word 'sabbat', which

Modern witch high priestess in a goat mask: the god who was worshipped at the witches' sabbath was said to appear in human and animal forms, especially as a goat

some modern writers insist on, is merely the French spelling of 'sabbath'.) Early references to the meeting bring out the sexual and animal elements in it. The witch submits her body to the Devil and to other witches, the Devil appears as a goat or some other animal – presumably represented by a man dressed up – and he is saluted with the 'obscene kiss' on his backside.

Later accounts suggest that the meetings were usually, though not always, held at night and in the open air, with smaller gatherings sometimes held in a house or in a church. The atmosphere of dream and fantasy enters the picture at once with the question of how the witches went to the meeting. Very often they seem to have used perfectly normal means, walking or riding, but it was an old belief that among the uncanny powers of the witch was the ability to fly (see EUROPEAN WITCH PERSECUTIONS). Once it was firmly established that being a witch meant being in league with the Devil, it was widely accepted that he enabled his servants to ride through the air to the sabbath on demonic animals, broomsticks, reeds or wisps of straw.

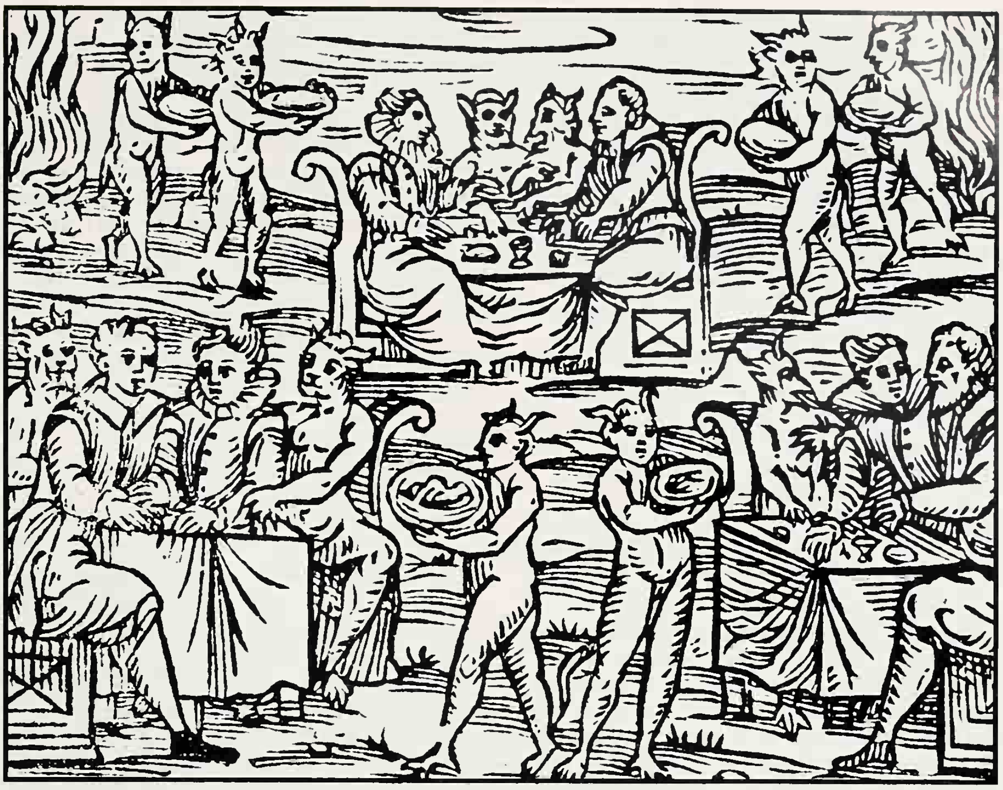
In 1664 in Somerset a woman named Julian Cox told how one evening, about a mile from her house, she saw three people riding towards her on broomsticks, four to five feet above the ground. Two of them she knew, a witch and a wizard, the third she did not: 'he came in the shape of a black man'. Two years earlier, in Scotland, Isabel Gowdie (see GOWDIE) said that she would make a 'horse' of a straw or a beanstalk, putting it between her legs and saying, 'Horse and hattock in the Devil's name', and then flying away wherever she liked, as straws blow along a road in the wind.

Out of the Body

The ointment which the witches smeared on themselves may have caused delusions of flying (see FLYING OINTMENT), and some of the accounts may even have something to do with what we would now call 'astral' or 'out-of-the-body' experiences, but some suggest dancing, in the manner of 'ride a cockhorse to Banbury cross', rather than flight. In other accounts it is the staff which is smeared with ointment, not the witch.

Whatever the truth may have been, most writers on witchcraft remained convinced that, with the Devil's aid, witches really flew through the air, and their lack of humour allowed them to accept even the most comically far-fetched tales. Guazzo's *Compendium Maleficarum* (1626) quotes with impassive solemnity and approbation a story about some soldiers at Calais who heard voices emanating from a black cloud in the sky. One of them fired a bullet at the cloud and from it there dropped a very fat, naked, drunken female of mature years, hit in the thigh. When they questioned her, 'she pretended to be feeble minded'.

Descriptions of what happened at the sabbath, and in what order, vary from area to area and author to author, but it generally seems to have begun with the witches acknowledging the Devil as their god and giving him the obscene kiss as a mark of their utter subjection to his will. They reported the acts of magic and malice they had done since the previous meeting and received instructions and guidance: 'at what time,' says King James's *Demonology*, 'their master enquiring of them what they would be at, every one proposes unto him what wicked turn they would have done, either for obtaining of riches, or for revenging them upon any whom they have malice at, who granting their demands (as no doubt willingly he will, since it is to do evil) he teacheth them the means whereby they may do the same'.



John Webb

Witches and demons at the sabbath, from Guazzo's *Compendium Maleficarum*: feasting was believed to be an important element of the rites, and it was said that witches took no salt with their meal, salt being hostile to the nature of demons

Next, new recruits would be formally presented to the Devil to renounce Christianity and swear allegiance to him, and there might be weddings between members to be celebrated or baptisms to be performed. According to the French witch-hunter Pierre de Lancre (see BASQUE WITCHCRAFT), 'witches were accustomed to have their children baptized more often at the sabbath than in church, and presented more often to the Devil than to God.'

A Foul and Horrid Fire

In making obeisance to their master, the witches are reported to have adopted curious postures. Guazzo says: 'When these members of the devil have met together, they generally light a foul and horrid fire. The devil is president of the Assembly and sits on a throne in some horrid shape, as of a goat or a dog; and they approach him to adore him, but not always in the same manner. For sometimes they bend their knees as suppliants, and sometimes stand with their backs turned, and sometimes kick their legs high up so that their heads are bent back and their chins point to the sky... they turn their backs and, going backwards like crabs, put out their hands behind them to touch him in supplication. When they speak, they turn their faces to the ground; and they do all things in a manner foreign to the use of other men.'

Reversing the normal order of things is appropriate to the worship of the Devil as the great rebel against God and against Christian values, and approaching him backwards may have been an example of this, like the candles offered to him, which were black instead of white. The candles also fit his role as Lucifer, 'light-bearer', the star fallen from heaven, and he was sometimes said to have had a lighted candle on his head, between his horns, from which his worshippers lighted their own candles.

The obscene kiss is another example of the reversal of accepted values. According to de Lancre, one witch of southwestern France said that the Devil had the form of a goat and beneath his tail he had a second face, which was black, and it was this which she kissed.

The next part of the meeting seems to have been the feasting and dancing. Descriptions of the feast vary considerably. Sometimes the witches are said to enjoy a substantial meal, like the Lancashire witches who sat down to beef, bacon and roast mutton. The Somerset witches ate meat and cakes, and drank wine or beer. The 'man in black' sat at the head of the table with his favourite female witch beside him. Isabel Gowdie described the Devil presiding at the head of the table, 'and when we had ended eating, we looked steadfastly to the Devil, and bowing ourselves to him, we said to the Devil, We thank thee, our Lord, for this.' Madeleine de Demandolx (see AIX-EN-PROVENCE NUNS) followed popular tradition in saying that the witches feasted on bread and malmsey wine, and the cooked flesh of young children. They took no salt with their meal, salt being a preservative and therefore hostile to the nature of demons, which are agents of corruption.

But many authorities believed that all things connected with the Evil One must necessarily be 'foul and horrid'. Remy says in his *Demonolatry* that all who have attended the Devil's table agree 'that his banquets are so foul either in appearance or smell that they would easily cause nausea in the hungriest and greediest stomach... And for drink he gives them in a dirty little cup wine like clots of black blood.'

'I am Always Caressed'

Dancing was evidently a vital element in the sabbath, and Remy regarded this as a survival from pagan times. 'The dances which were in ancient days performed in the worship of demons [pagan deities] are still used today at their nocturnal assemblies.' He says that they danced in a ring, back to back, and one witch told him that they always moved to the left widdershins, or contrary to the course of the sun. They carried their dancing to a point 'little short of madness' and on returning home found themselves utterly exhausted.

Pierre de Lancre was told that the witches danced back to back and hand in hand, led by the black goat himself and usually moving to the left. Guazzo says that they formed 'a frenzied ring with hands joined and back to back; and so they dance, throwing their heads like frantic folk, sometimes holding in their hands the candles which they have before used in worshipping the devil'.

The main purpose of the dancing seems to have been to create a state of wild emotional intoxication that culminated in the frenzied sexual orgy in which the sabbath reached its peak. The Devil himself pleasured many of the witches and it was said that all restraints of sex, age and relationship were swept away in an ecstatically abandoned revel that included virtually every conceivable heterosexual and homosexual perversion. Many writers insisted that, far from being pleasurable, the Devil's attentions were frightening and painful. A French witch tried in 1594 was quoted as saying that when the goat copulated with her she found it painful, and that his semen was cold as ice. A girl named Jeannette d'Abbadie, aged 16, told de Lancre that she had been carnally known by Satan many times: 'she feared coupling with the Devil because his member was scaly and caused intense pain; and his semen was extremely cold, so much so that she had never been made pregnant by him, or by the other men at the sabbath.'

Accounts of the Devil's genital equipment and the coldness of his emission, as well as his remarkable powers of endurance, suggest the use of an artificial phallus. One of the rare notes of humour in the horrifying annals of the witch persecutions is in another confession reported by de Lancre, that of Marie de Marigrane of Biarritz, aged 15, who said that 'she had often seen the Devil couple with a multitude of women, whom she knew by name and surname, and that it was the Devil's custom to have intercourse with the beautiful women from the front, and with the ugly from the rear'.

The experience was not always described as unpleasant. The Italian witch judge Paulus Grillandus said that several women told him that they enjoyed the Devil with 'the greatest voluptuousness'; a French witch said, 'I will not be other than I am; I find too much content in my condition; I am always caressed'; and Isabel Gowdie enjoyed what may have been a perverse mixture of pleasure and pain, saying that the Devil was 'heavy like a malt-sack; a huge nature, very cold, as ice' but also that 'he is abler for us that way than any man can be'.

Several witches, despite the pressure brought to bear on them to repent their ways, insisted that the sabbath was an occasion of joy and delight. One of them told de Lancre that 'the sabbath was the true paradise, where there was more joy than could be expressed. Those who went there found the time too short because of the pleasure and happiness they enjoyed, so that they left with infinite regret and longed for the time when they could go again'. Another, a very beautiful woman aged 28, said that 'she had more pleasure and happiness in going to the sabbath than to Mass, for the Devil made them believe him to be the true God, and that the joy which the witches had at the sabbath was but the prelude of much greater glory'. In England, Elinor Shaw and Mary Phillips were asked to say their prayers before execution, but they laughed, 'calling for the Devil to come and help them in such a blasphemous manner, as is not fit to mention... and as they lived the Devil's true factors, so they resolutely died in his service'.

The Murray Theory

In *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (1921), Margaret Murray advanced the theory that the witches had preserved the old pagan religion of pre-Christian Europe. 'The evidence proves that underlying the Christian religion was a cult practised by many classes of the community, chiefly, however, by the more ignorant or those in the less thickly inhabited parts of the country. It can be traced back to pre-Christian times and appears to be the ancient religion of western Europe.'

This brilliantly ingenious theory has persuaded a good many writers on witchcraft and has greatly influenced modern witches (and the theory's attraction for the modern mind is itself an interesting fact). But the evidence does not really support the view that through centuries of Christianity a pagan cult survived in the assemblies of witches, especially as none of the witches or their investigators ever said that it did. It looks as if the views of people at the time were nearer to the truth: that the real witches, as distinct from the many who were bullied or tortured into making false confessions, were worshipping, not the pagan god of a hypothetical 'old religion' but the Devil of Christianity as the opponent of the Christian God and the lord and master of all sensual pleasure and fleshly delight.

This gives point to the accusation that the culminating orgy of the sabbath came at the end of a religious ceremony which was a parody of the Mass, degrading and blaspheming the Christian ritual and turning it into an act of worship of the Devil. Paulus Grillandus said: 'Those witches who have solemnly devoted themselves to the Devil's service, worship him in a particular manner with ceremonial sacrifices, which they offer to the Devil, imitating in all respects the worship of Almighty God, with vestments, lights, and every other ritual observance, so that they worship and praise him, just as we worship the true God.' In 1678 there was a meeting of the witches of Lothian in Scotland, at which a deposed Presbyterian minister took the part of the Devil and preached a sermon. 'Among other things, he told them that they were more happy in him than they could be in God; him they saw, but God they could not see; and in mockery of Christ and his holy ordinance of the sacrament of his supper he gives the sacrament to them, bidding them eat it and to drink it in remembrance of himself.'

Another account of the same meeting says that the Devil 'adventured to give them the communion or holy sacrament, the bread was like wafers, the drink was sometimes blood, sometimes black mosswater. He preached and most blasphemously mocked them, if they offered to trust in God who left them miserable in the world, and neither he nor his son Jesus Christ ever appeared to them when they called on them, as he had, who would not cheat them.' (See also BLACK MASS; FRENCH WITCHCRAFT).

Survival of an Idea

There were certainly pagan survivals in witchcraft, as there were in Christianity itself, but this is not the same thing as the continuance of a pagan cult. That the god of the witches was Cernunnos, the Celtic horned god, or Pan, or Dionysus, are enticing but not finally convincing proposals. What seems more likely than the survival of any particular pagan god is the survival of an idea. The witches were, after all, practitioners of magic, and they seem to have shared the magical sense of the value of the animal in man. The frenzied dancing and the orgiastic worship of a god in animal form imply the letting loose of all the animal elements of human nature, which in magical theory is a step towards the achievement of wholeness, towards the liberation of the real inward self, and so towards achievement of the divine.

The witches may have believed that they attained the divine in the sabbath, especially in the sexual union with the god. This god was the master of life on earth, not a distant being in a far-off heaven. 'Him they saw, but God they could not see.' This was a god through whom they could achieve release, power and divinity in the flesh, and through the flesh, who had not gone away and left them behind, 'miserable in the world', and who, they thought, would not cheat them. (See also SATANISM).

RICHARD CAVENDISH

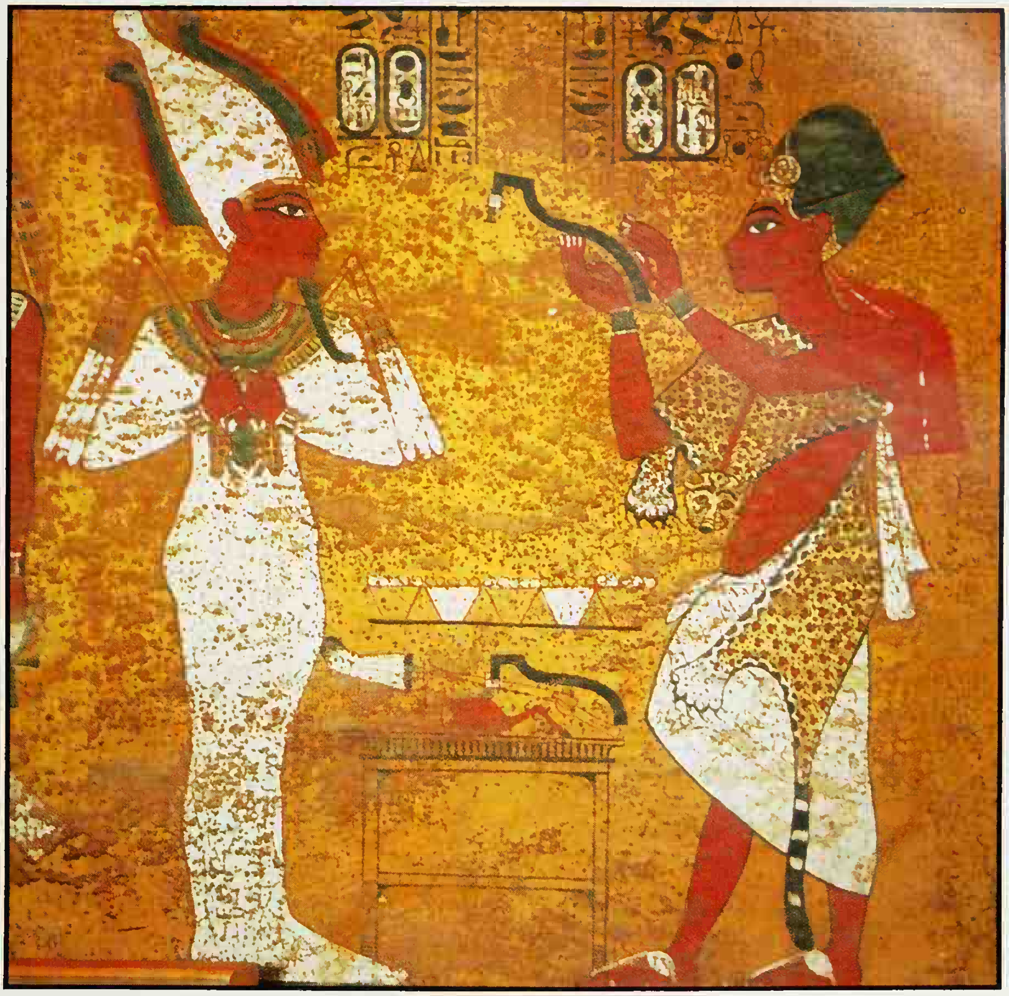
'o the Christian a sacrament is 'an outward and
isible sign of an inward and spiritual grace', but
ne sacramental principle in the quest of super-
atural benefits is found in many other religions,
nd is closely akin to magic

SACRAMENTS

N SEEKING to possess himself of super-
atural power or grace, man has instinctively
elt the need to use forms of ritual action
nd manipulate material objects deemed
ppropriate to his purpose. There are some
otable exceptions to this general tendency:
or example, the mystic endeavours by
nental or physical effort alone to achieve
ome desired spiritual state or virtue. How-
ver, since human nature is compounded of
naterial and non-material elements, what
as been called 'the sacramental principle'
both a necessary and intelligible pattern
f behaviour. The sacramental principle is
sefully and succinctly defined in the
atechism of the Anglican Book of Common
rayer as involving 'an outward and visible
ign of an inward and spiritual grace'. This
efinition naturally expresses a Christian
valuation of what constitutes a sacrament,
nd it is related to the important place that
acraments have in most forms of Christian
aith and practice. But the sacramental
rinciple is to be found in many other
eligions, and in its operation this principle
often closely akin to magic.

The ancient Egyptian ceremony of the
Opening of the Mouth' provides a particu-
arly graphic instance. The rite was carried
ut shortly before the embalmed body of a
ead person was lowered into the sepulchral
hamber of the tomb. The process of mum-
nification (see MUMMIFICATION) had
nsured the preservation of the corpse from
ecay; but if the deceased person was to
ve in his tomb, as the Egyptians fervently
oped, it was necessary to restore to his
mbalmed body the ability to see and
reathe, and to take nourishment.

The ritual 'Opening of the Mouth' was a
urious compound of symbolic and practical
ction. It was symbolic in so far as the
ction was performed on the corpse, which
as completely swathed in bandages, with
mummy-mask over its head and face. In
ther words, in the ritual actions of touching
ne mouth and eyes, to restore the use of
nese organs, actual contact was not made
ith them; it was enough to touch the
ppropriate parts of the mummy-mask as
n 'outward and visible sign'. However, the
ction was not just ritual miming; certain
ther factors were involved for the achieve-
nent of the desired result, as the Egyptians
onceived it. A peculiarly shaped implement
f bronze called a *mshtiw* had to be used
or 'opening' the mouth and eyes. The ritual
ction had to be accompanied by the reading
f a prescribed text which stated the inten-
on of the act: to do for the deceased what
ad once been done by Horus for his dead
ather Osiris (see OSIRIS). Further, the rite
ad to be performed by a special *sem*-priest,
hile a lector-priest read the text. On
nalysis, therefore, to endow the dead person with supernatural power, the rite of the 'Opening of the Mouth' involved three elements: ritual action that required the use of a specified implement; a solemn statement of intent by an ordained minister; and the authority of a divine precedent.



Part of the ritual of the 'Opening of the Mouth', from an Egyptian tomb: a bronze implement was used to 'open' the mouth and eyes of a mummy, so as to restore the corpse's ability to see, breathe, eat and drink

In the celebrated Eleusinian Mysteries (see ELEUSIS; MYSTERY RELIGIONS), the initiates, who had been fasting, partook of a special drink called the *kykeon*. It was made of meal mixed with water and flavoured with soft-mint. The initiates drank this potion in memory of what the goddess Demeter had done at Eleusis during her search for her daughter Persephone. In sorrow, she had fasted, but finally had assented to drink a potion concocted as the kykeon. In the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, the authenticating occasion is described: 'And Metaneira mixed the draught and gave it to the goddess as she bade. So the great queen Deo received it to observe the sacrament.'

There has been much discussion among scholars about the significance of this ritual drinking of the kykeon. That it was commemorative of what Demeter was believed to have done is clear, as was also the abstention from food by the initiates. But there is much reason for thinking that the act was invested with a deeper meaning. In terms of the principle of the ritual perpetuation of the past, which operates in most cultic acts, the solemn repetition of what Demeter had once done on a crucial occasion gave the initiates a sense of communion with the goddess.

These examples, selected from many, attest to the operation of the sacramental principle as a natural pattern of man's behaviour when in quest of supernatural power or grace. It is easy to describe the examples cited as magical transactions in a denigrating sense, but a more wisely sympathetic approach would evaluate them as significant expressions of the spiritual aspirations of mankind, of which the Christian sacraments are more sophisticated and refined examples.

Christian Sacraments

The word 'sacrament' has acquired its distinctive theological meaning from Christian usage. The Latin word *sacramentum* meant originally the pledge of security deposited in public keeping by the parties engaged in a lawsuit, or the oath taken by Roman soldiers to the emperor. In the Western Church, the term was adopted to translate the Greek *mysterion*, which had long been used as a designation for the secret rites of the Mystery religions.

Catholic Christianity, both Eastern and Western, recognizes seven sacraments, of which two are distinguished as the greater sacraments. These are baptism and the Lord's Supper, the institution and ordering of which are clearly recorded in the New

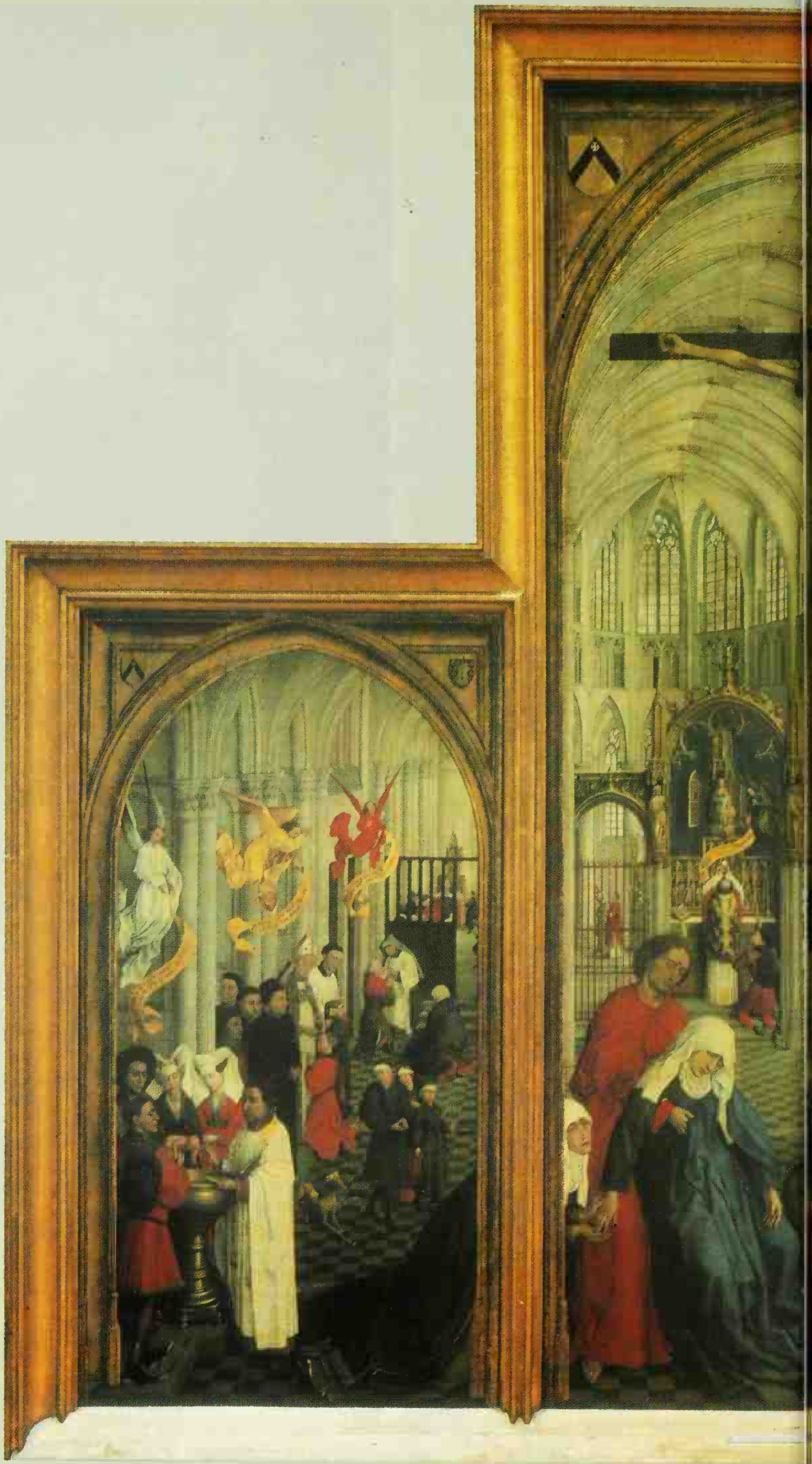
Testament. The origins of the five lesser sacraments are obscure, and their recognition throughout the Church was gradual. The interpretation of the sacraments has greatly occupied Christian theologians throughout the centuries, and many of their definitions, and the practices which have stemmed from them, have provoked great controversies. Rejection of certain medieval doctrines concerning the Lord's Supper or Mass characterized the Protestant reformers. Protestants generally recognize only baptism and the Lord's Supper as sacraments; but they disagree with aspects of the Catholic interpretation of them, and also differ from each other in their own interpretation and practice.

Catholic sacramental theology became very subtle in the terminology of its definitions, especially during the Middle Ages when it was influenced by Aristotelian metaphysics. A valid sacrament is defined as one having the proper 'matter' (for example, water in baptism); the proper 'form' (that is, the recitation of prescribed formulas: 'This is My Body; This is My Blood' in the Mass); and as being administered by a properly ordained priest or bishop, with the 'right intention' of doing what the Church ordains. If these requirements are satisfied, the faithful can confidently expect to receive the grace of the sacraments, irrespective of the worthiness of the minister. In other words, the grace is conveyed *ex opere operato*, by the enactment of the prescribed rite.

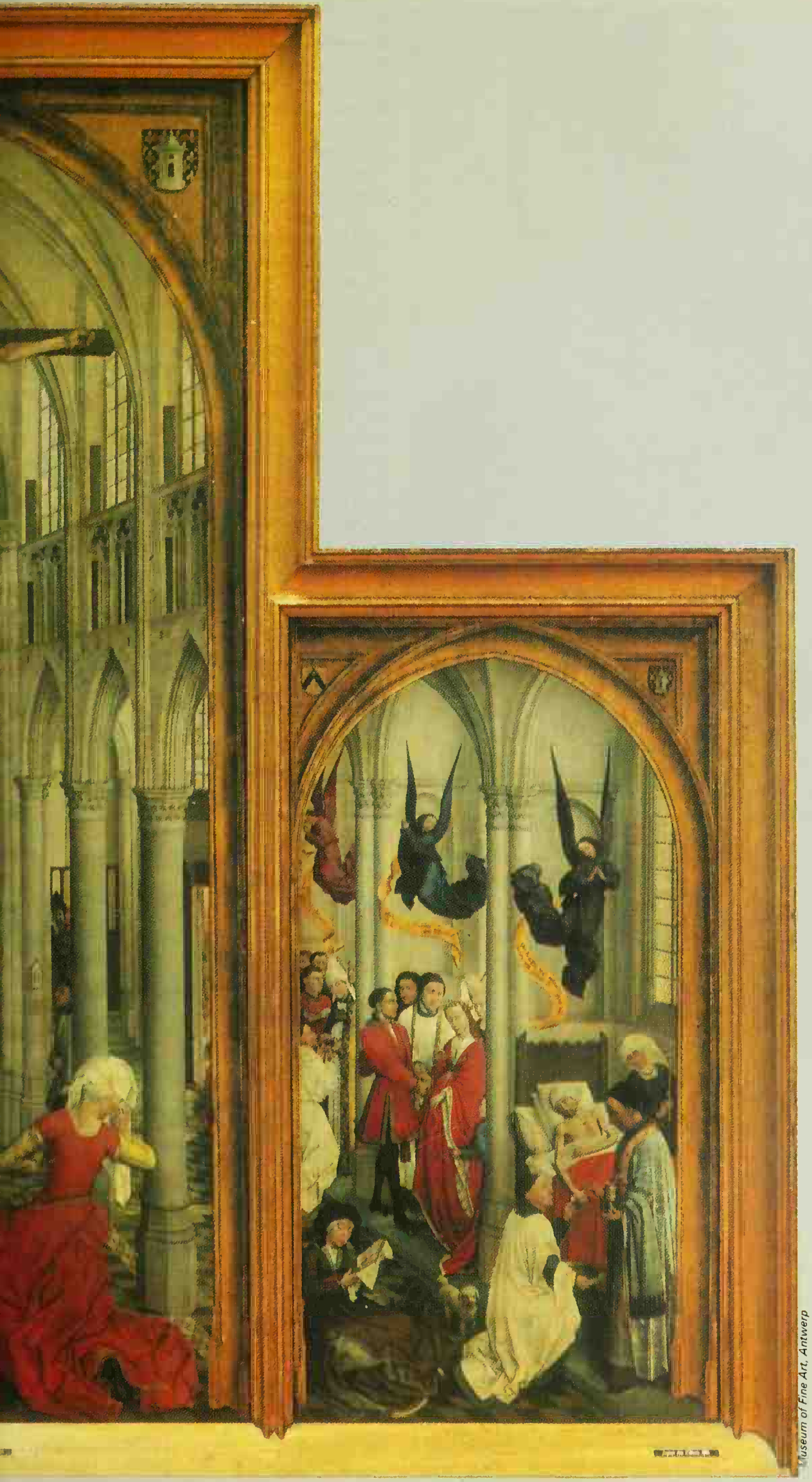
Body and Blood

The seven sacraments of the Catholic Church are: baptism (see BAPTISM); the Lord's Supper; confirmation; holy orders; penance; matrimony; and extreme unction (see OIL). The supreme sacrament is that variously described as the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, Eucharist or Mass (see MASS). The institution of the rite is first recorded by St Paul, c 55 AD (1 Corinthians, chapter 11) and is described, with variations, in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. The words of institution used by Christ gave the rite a twofold significance. The consumption by the faithful of bread and wine, specially consecrated as the body and blood of Christ, signified an act of communion with Christ effected by the taking into the body of the consecrated elements. The symbolism of the broken body and outpoured blood implied sacrifice, thus making the rite commemorative or representative of the crucifixion of Christ, interpreted theologically as the atoning sacrifice offered for the sins of mankind. These implications inspired the development of two of the most notable doctrines of medieval Christianity: transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the Mass.

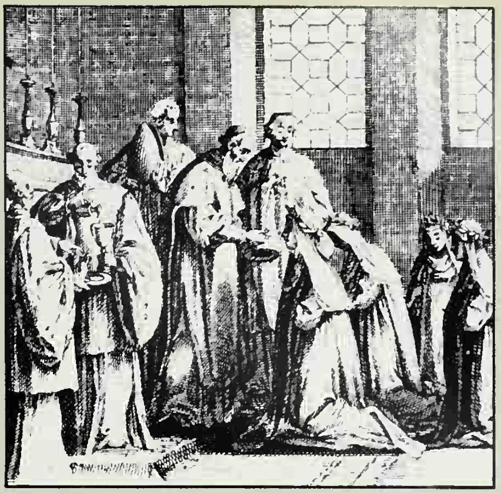
According to the doctrine of transubstantiation, the substance or essence of the bread and wine are transformed by the words of consecration into the body and blood of Christ, although they still retain their outward appearance of bread and wine. This doctrine led to the idea that, at Mass, Christ is present on the altar, and could be carried about in processions or the sacred



The seven sacraments of Catholic Christianit are the Eucharist, baptism, confirmation, hol orders, penance, marriage and extreme unction the first two of these being regarded as 'greate sacraments'. The Latin word *sacramentum* wa used in the Western Church to translate th Greek word for the secret rites of the Myster



Museum of Fine Art, Antwerp



host (the consecrated bread). The doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass teaches that, at each celebration, Christ's sacrifice is re-presented to God the Father, often with some special intention. Thus at Requiem Masses, the sacrifice is offered for the repose of the souls of specified deceased persons.

The sacrament of confirmation was originally part of the rite of baptism. Its 'outward and visible sign' is the laying on of hands, administered by a bishop, on baptized candidates so that they may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, according to the authorizing precedent recorded in the Acts of the Apostles (8. 14–17).

The sacrament of holy orders is essentially connected with the doctrine of apostolic succession, according to which the Apostles passed on to their successors the priestly power and authority which they had received from Christ. The 'outward and visible sign' is the laying on of the bishop's hands as the means of transmitting apostolic grace and authority. In the consecration of a bishop, an archbishop and other bishops impose their hands; the ordination of priests is performed by a bishop. In the Roman Catholic Church, the solemn delivery of a chalice and paten, the instruments for celebrating Mass, to a candidate for the priesthood is part of the ordination rites.

The sacrament of penance finds its divine authority in the gospel of John (19. 21–23), where Jesus is recorded to have commissioned his Apostles to 'remit' or 'retain' sins. The evolution of this sacrament is obscure; it would appear that the Church gradually developed a system of the private confession of sins to a priest, who gives absolution and some form of penance. In 1215 the Lateran Council decreed that every Christian should make sacramental confession of his sins at least once a year.

The establishment of the sacramental character of matrimony originally encountered the hesitation of certain theologians, because it was difficult to discern how the rite was productive of spiritual grace. The epistle to the Ephesians (5. 22–23) was generally accepted as authorizing its status as a sacrament. But, although this status has been accorded in Catholic Christianity, it is recognized that matrimony differs from the other sacraments in that the parties themselves are the ministers of the sacrament; the officiating priest at the marriage

**ligions, and the Church of England has de-
ned the sacramental principle as involving
n outward and visible sign of an inward and
iritual grace'**

bove **Roger van der Weyden's painting, *The
even Sacraments***

p right **Nuns receiving Holy Communion**

Michael Holford

Scene from the celebration of Mass in a Roman Catholic church: the Mass, Eucharist, Holy Communion or Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ himself, as first recorded in the epistles of St Paul

ceremony is only the Church's appointed witness, who pronounces the Church's blessing on the union.

In some of these sacraments the 'form' and 'matter' are difficult to discern, and their definition seems to be rather contrived. However, they have been integrated into the pattern of the Christian life, and interpreted theologically as an extension of the principle of the incarnation of Christ (see INCARNATION). Thus it is maintained that as God became incarnated for the salvation of man, so the sacraments are divinely ordained means whereby spiritual grace is mediated by material means to the human soul, indwelling a material body. But though legitimately evaluated thus in terms of Christian theology, the Christian sacraments are founded on a principle that has found expression in many other religions, both ancient and modern.

S. G. F. BRANDON

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SACRED MAGIC OF ABRA-MELIN

THIS MAGICAL TEXTBOOK influenced both MacGregor Mathers, a leading figure in the Order of the Golden Dawn, and his pupil and later enemy, Aleister Crowley (see CROWLEY; GOLDEN DAWN). Mathers was told about this 18th century French manuscript in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris, purporting to be a translation of a Hebrew original of 1458, by friends who thought it had been known to Eliphas Levi and Bulwer Lytton (see LEVI; LYTTON). He translated it into English as *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin, the Mage*.

Mathers explains in his introduction that the 'sacred magic' is based on the theory that the material world is the creation of evil spirits, the rebel angels who were expelled from heaven, working under the control of the good angels. Men stand midway between the angelic and the demonic, and each man is attended by a guardian angel and a malevolent demon, 'so that with him it rests to give the victory unto the which he will'. The demons can be mastered by initiates of the 'Magic of Light' in alliance with the angels, and the crucial process in the system of Abra-Melin is 'by purity and self-denial to obtain the knowledge of and conversation with one's Guardian Angel, so that thereby and thereafter we may obtain the right of using the Evil Spirits for our servants in all material matters'. Mathers and Crowley took the Holy Guardian Angel to be the higher self of the magician and the 'knowledge and conversation' of it to mean the liberation of the true self from the depth's of the magician's being and his conscious identification with it.

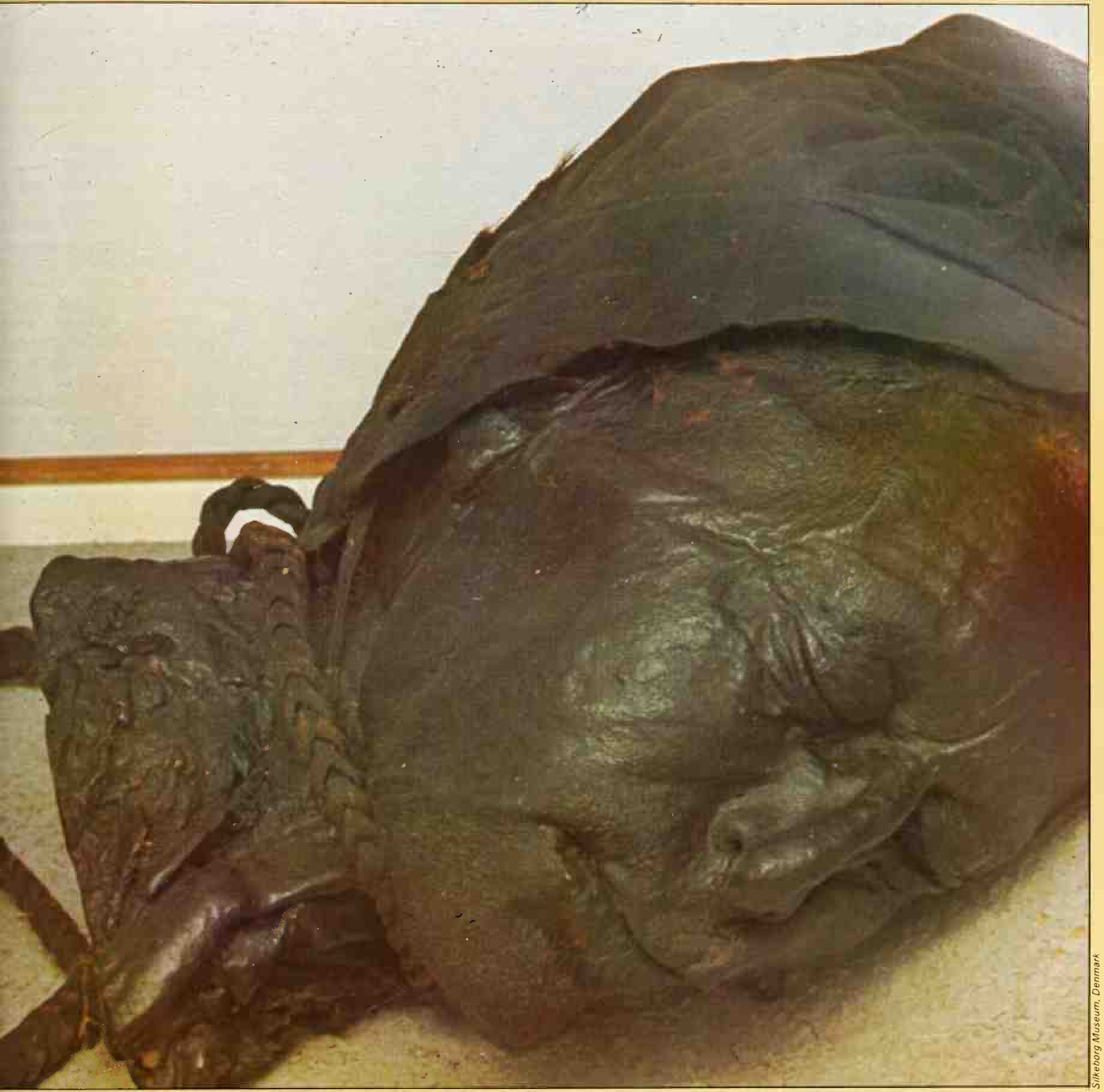
The book condemns the other European magical textbooks, with their paraphernalia of instruments and symbols and incantations, and their insistence on the importance of timing a magical operation in the day and hour of the appropriate planet (see RITUAL MAGIC). 'All the books which treat of Characters, Extravagant Figures, Circles, Convocations, Conjurations, Invocations, and other like matters, even although any one may see some effect thereby, should be rejected, being works full of Diabolical Inventions.' Mathers, in a footnote, deprecates this sweeping condemnation.

Enflamed with Prayer

Instead, for attaining the knowledge and conversation of the angel, Abra-Melin recommends a simpler but long-drawn and intense process of prayer and concentration. Some trappings and instruments are required, including an 'oratory' or private place in which to pray, a wooden altar, a robe of crimson or scarlet silk, a crown of silk and a wand of almond, but essentially the angel is summoned through dedicated concentration on it. 'Firstly: having carefully washed one's whole body and having put on fresh clothing: precisely a quarter of an hour before Sunrise ye shall enter into your Oratory, and place yourselves upon your knees before the Altar, turning your face towards the window; and devoutly and with boldness ye shall invoke the Name of the Lord.' The magician must give thanks for God's goodness, must confess his sins and ask forgiveness, and must pray to God to send the holy angel.

The process takes six 'moons' and the prayers must be continued day by day, with the magician concentrating on the task and austerely avoiding distractions. In the final stage, Abra-Melin recommends that a small child, clothed in white from head to foot, should be present in the oratory and the magician should enflame himself with prayer and call on the angel 'to appear and show himself unto this innocent being'.

Once the magician has achieved 'the Vision of the Angel', he can with the angel's aid summon and command the legions of evil, of whose names and offices a long list is provided. The book ends with a collection of magic squares (see MAGIC SQUARES). Each represents a wish in the magician's mind and touching it or handling it compels the spirits to give effect to it. The squares' uses range from knowing all things past and future, or having beautiful visions, or hindering all necromantic and magical operations from taking effect ('except those of the Cabala, or of this Sacred Magic'), to finding all kinds of treasures, walking on water, having armed men for one's defence, or exciting every description of hatred and enmity, discords, quarrels, contentions, combats, battles, loss and damage.



Silkeborg Museum, Denmark

The head of 'Tollund Man', with the rope with which he was strangled or hanged around his neck, discovered in a peatbog in Denmark; he was probably sacrificed to the goddess Nerthus, guardian of the fertility of the fields

n almost universal phenomenon in the history f religion, sacrifice is the main means by hich man acknowledges his dependence on the nseen powers who control life and death

SACRIFICE

N MAY 1950 a Danish archeologist, Peter Glob, was called from his classes at arhus University to view a body. It had een discovered at a depth of almost seven eet in a peatbog in central Jutland. 'As usk fell,' he later wrote, 'we saw in the ading light a man take shape before us. Ie was curled up, with legs drawn under im and arms bent, resting on his side as asleep. His eyes were peacefully shut; his brows were furrowed and his mouth showed a slightly irritated quirk as if he were not overpleased by this unexpected disturbance of his rest.' Naked except for a leather belt and leather cap, the rope with which he had been strangled (or perhaps hanged) 2000 years ago was still around his neck.

'Tollund Man', as this discovery became known, may have been an executed criminal, but it is more likely that he had been sacrificed to the goddess Nerthus, the guardian of the fertility of the fields. Today he rests in a Danish museum, where the tourist can join the scholar in seeing a tangible piece of evidence of the nature of ancient religion.

Not all sacrifices were of human beings. But religion in the ancient world, and in parts of the modern world, involved so many forms of sacrifice that a full account of the history of this rite would be almost indistinguishable from the history of religion as such. It is this that modern man finds so hard to understand. To be sure, the word 'sacrifice' is still used: but in such a loose way as to obscure any original meaning it may have possessed.

It is first of all necessary to recognize that for most of history man has believed unquestioningly in the objective existence of a world parallel to his own, an unseen world peopled by gods, demons, ghosts, spirits, any one of which might influence his life in innumerable ways. Although for much of the time the workings of the unseen world were unpredictably mysterious, it was nevertheless believed that there were points of contact between the worlds, and that some degree of influence could be exerted at these points. In effect, the two worlds had to be kept in balance, and this involved man's acknowledgement of his proper position in the universe, and of his dependence on the unseen powers who controlled life, growth and death.

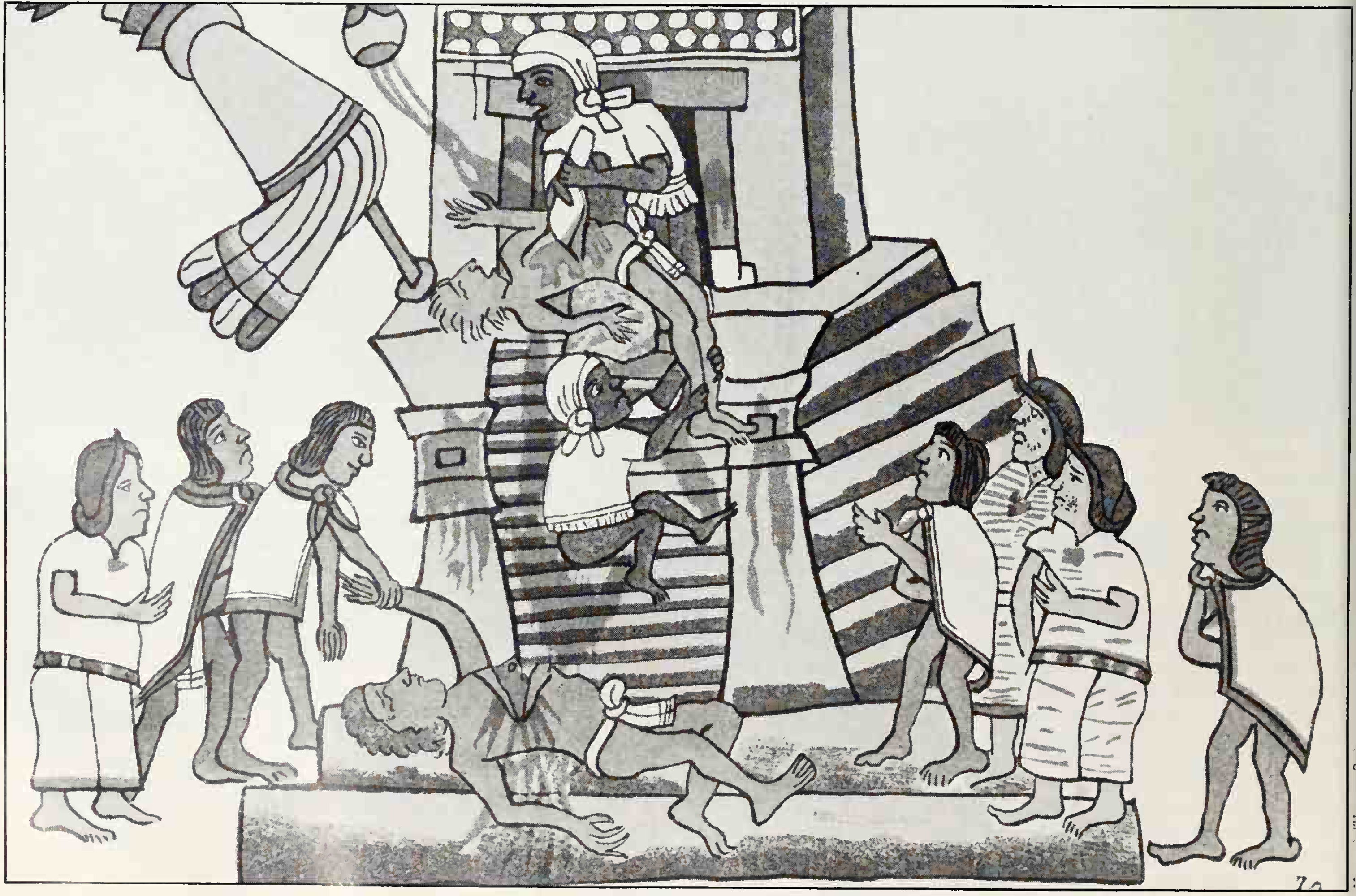
Sacrifice was the main means by which he sought to make this acknowledgement. A wellnigh universal phenomenon in the history of religion, it should always be understood as a mode of communication between man and the unseen powers, and an expression of his intentions in relation to those powers. The word comes from the Latin *sacrificium*, denoting a victim killed and consumed on the altar, that is, an object or animal which has been made *sacer* (holy) by being devoted wholly to one or other of the gods. A sacrifice is therefore something consecrated to a deity, either with a view to bringing about a certain result or reciprocal act from the deity's side, or with a view to establishing fellowship between man and the god.

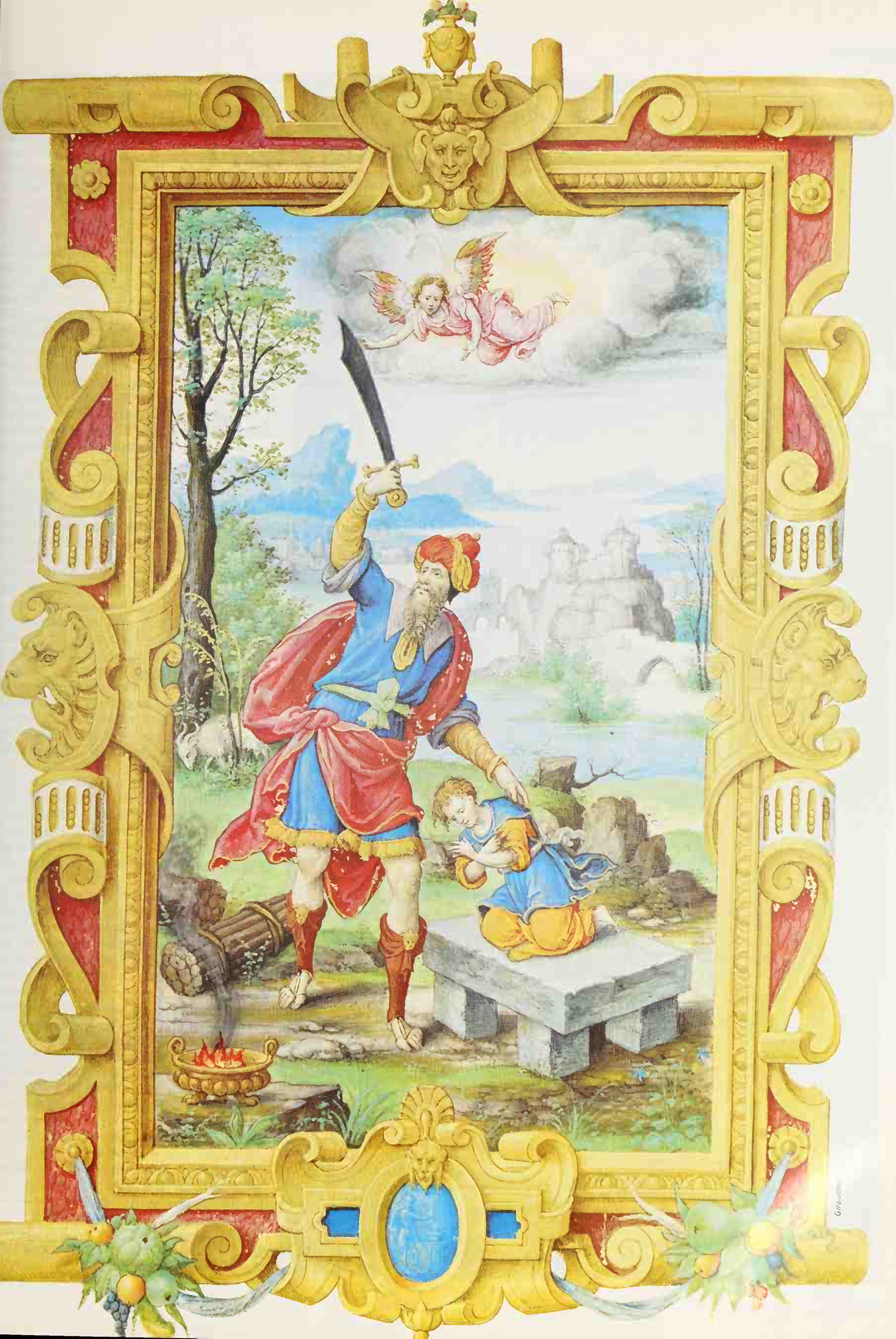
A sacrifice may be offered as a gift, as an act of atonement or as an act of fellowship and communion, but it is not always possible to distinguish sharply between these aspects. In the ancient world, for instance, the giving of a gift was in itself a means of establishing fellowship between giver and recipient, of restoring a broken relationship and of influencing the recipient. A king or emperor could not be approached at all unless gifts appropriate to the standing of the person concerned were offered, and there is a close connection between sacrifice and prayer, where a deity is approached in a similar way.

Clearly, a good deal depends on the worshipper's prior image of the deity, and on the degree to which the god is thought to be accessible to human approach. In many primitive societies the High Gods of the sky are the most remote of the gods (see HIGH GODS), and it is interesting that in many cases no sacrifices are made to them. They may once have created the world, but are no longer concerned in its day-to-day running, which they have delegated to lesser entities; it is to these spiritual beings that the majority of sacrifices are offered. If they are believed to be dwelling in a celestial paradise, the offering will normally be made by fire, which acts as a mediator between the two worlds; in the case of gods and goddesses of the earth the sacrifice may be buried, poured upon the ground, hidden in a cave or – to return to Tollund Man – sunk in a peatbog. Offerings to spirits of the forest may be left on a tree trunk, offerings to household gods may be made on the doorstep or hearthstone. Whatever the means, the basic purpose of sacrifice remains constant: to acknowledge man's dependence on the supernaturals and so to ensure their continued benevolence.

The supernatural world, like the world of men, was believed to form a hierarchy, and it was therefore necessary for an individual to approach only those deities or spirits that occupied a position comparable to his own. In the ancient world, sacrifice to the greatest gods might be offered only by the king, acting on behalf of his people, and usually only once a year, as with the sacrifices offered by the Chinese emperors to Shang Ti (Imperial Heaven) at the Altar of Heaven in Peking. At other times, the king's prerogatives would be delegated to members of a college of priests, who would act as mediators between men and the gods, taking care that the sacrifices were performed correctly. The individual in his home might of course offer sacrifices to lesser deities without the need for mediation, just as he might approach the lesser officials of the secular state.

The blood shed by a sacrificial victim symbolized the offering of life to a deity; in some cultures it was also thought to communicate new life to the fields *Below* Illustration from *The Book of Life of the Ancient Mexicans*: the Aztecs sacrificed human beings to the sun to ensure fertility in the coming year *Right* The book of Genesis tells how God tested the strength of Abraham's faith by commanding him to sacrifice his son Isaac: 16th century Italian painting showing an angel preventing Abraham from offering up his son





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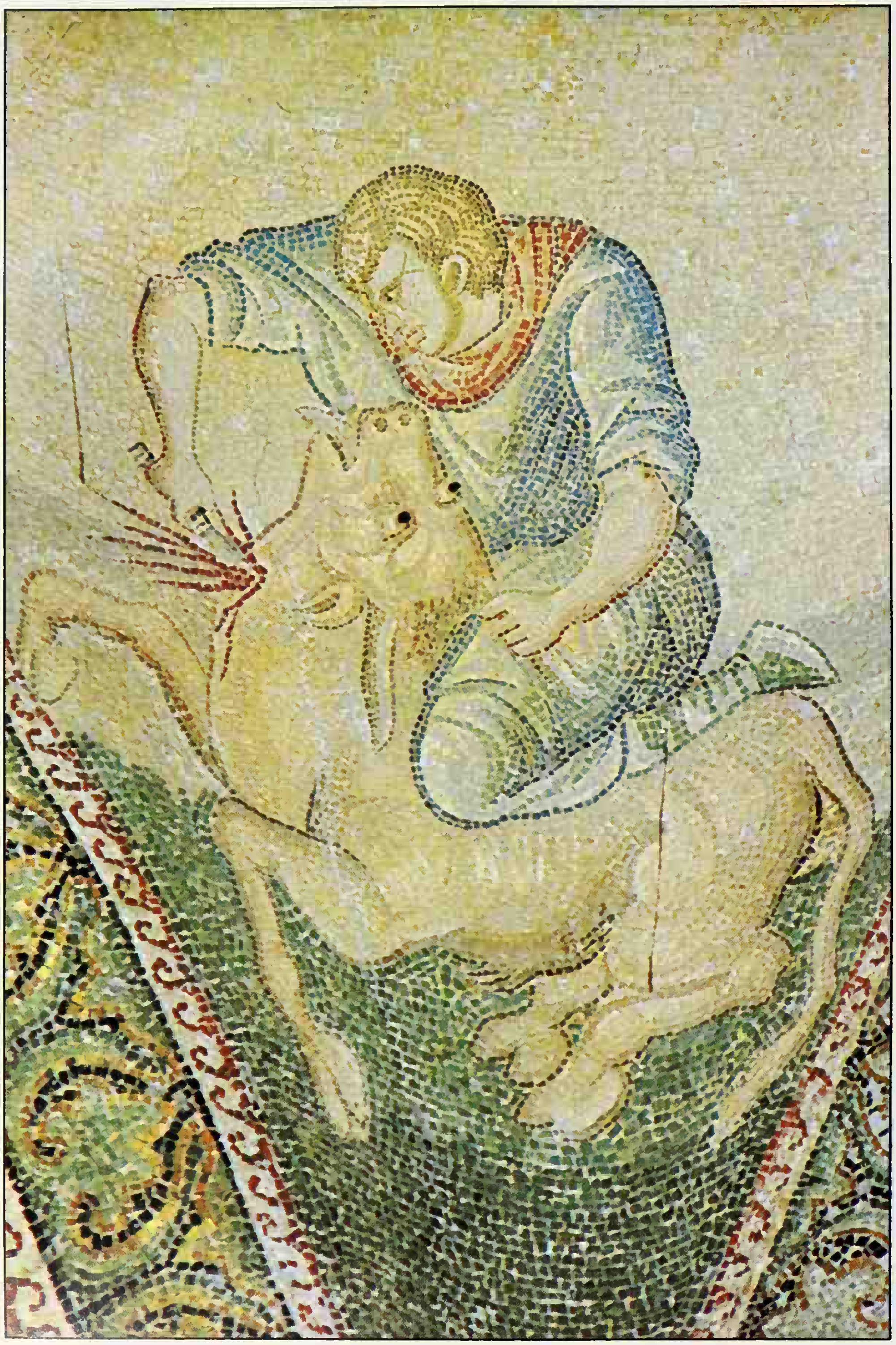

Goats have been sacrificial animals in many cultures; the Greeks, for instance, sacrificed 500 in thanksgiving for their victory at Marathon *Left* Mosaic showing a goat being killed *Facing page* A goat is ritually killed in modern Nepal and its head is carried on a tray; during the October festival of Bassain the Nepalese army sacrifices more than 30 bullocks and many goats to Durga, the Hindu goddess of victory

Sona Halliday

The places in which sacrifices were offered varied greatly. In primitive cultures, they were natural sites of peculiar sanctity (caves, hills, groves and the like), or tombs of the powerful dead. Such sanctuaries as these could strictly speaking be anywhere, consecrated for the purpose by the repetition of the appropriate sacred texts. However, with the advent of urban civilization, the necessity for a focus of sacred presence in the midst of the city led to the construction of temples as dwelling-places of the gods; and it was here, on the temple altar or altars, that sacrifice was mainly offered. The temple was often conceived on the analogy of a royal court, with the temple staff as the god-king's servants. Sacrifice was made to the god as an adjunct of personal and communal requests, and also as a regular feature of the daily life of the divine court. Thus the god would be given regular nourishment as well as being honoured by the worshippers' gifts. Today the Hindu temple in India corresponds most closely to this once universal form of sacred symbolism.

Sacrifice in a Hindu temple takes very innocuous forms. Except in a very few cases, what is sacrificed is food, drink, flowers and coloured powders (although at some temples of Kali, blood sacrifices still occur). The sacrificial altar has disappeared, and the offering is simply placed before the image, before being, in many cases, distributed among the worshippers. However, it must be recognized that this is the end product of a long development. In Vedic times (beginning in perhaps 1200 BC and reaching down into the Middle Ages) the practice of blood sacrifice was common in India, and the earliest Indian holy scriptures, the *Vedas* and *Brahmanas*, form in effect a sacrificial manual of great complexity. The entire Vedic religion centred on sacrifice. It was sacrifice that regulated relations between men and gods, that maintained the order of the universe and provided the only conditions on which man's life was believed to be possible (see also HINDUISM).

An ancient Hindu text states that the gods exist by gifts from below, just as men exist by gifts from above. The idea may seem excessively naive, but there is evidence from a number of ancient religions that this was indeed believed to be the case. A well-known example is found in the ancient Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which contains a story of a great flood. The gods were utterly famished when the flood cut off their supply of sacrificial food; and when the waters finally abated and Utnapishtim emerged from his Ark and offered a sacrifice, they gathered round the smoke 'like flies'. An echo of this is found in Genesis, chapter 8: 'Then Noah built an altar to the Lord . . . and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing odour . . .'

Reddening with Blood

A similar illustration is found in the *Bhagavad Gita* (see BHAGAVAD GITA). The practice of cremating the dead had a great deal in common with the practice of offering sacrifice by fire: in each case the fire (the god Agni) acted as mediator between the two worlds, and the dead were transported to the heavenly regions, where they enjoyed the same conditions as the gods, and where the same kind of offerings could be made to them. At the opening of the *Gita*, Prince Arjuna is finding reasons why he ought not to engage in battle with his relatives in an opposing army, and observes that if one destroys a family (which he is about to do), then the rules of the family collapse; and since one of the rules has to do with the offering of sacrifices to the departed ancestors, the sacrifices will no longer be offered, and the ancestors will 'fall out of blessedness, cheated of their offerings of rice and water'.

The image of famished gods and ancestors toppling out of heaven is an intriguing one, but sacrifice was seldom conceived on this elementary level, or at least, the conception was soon outgrown. More important is the image of the temple as the court of the heavenly ruler, at which gifts were ffered as a means of establishing a relation-ip with the deity, and as a necessary oncomitant of petitionary prayer. The rule as never to go empty-handed to one's Lord earthly or heavenly. In ancient Iran the ord *yaz* means both 'prayer' and 'sacrifice', hile in the Old Testament there occurs the xt: 'O Lord, in the morning thou dost hear y voice; in the morning I prepare a sacri-ce for thee, and watch' (Psalms 5.3).

With very few exceptions, sacrifice was ffered in accordance with larger or naller cycles of time. Like prayer, it ight follow a daily cycle, dictated to me extent by the 'needs' of the god or oddess to whom it was offered. But the reater sacrifices were annual, falling at rious points on the calendar (which as usually lunar) or at the solstices.

Over and above the annual or seasonal cle, there was in some cases a multi-nnual cycle. For instance, at the pre-hristian temple of Old Uppsala in Sweden, e greatest sacrifices of men, horses and her animals were offered every ninth ear. 'It is customary,' wrote the 11th cen-ry historian and geographer Adam of remen, 'to solemnise at Uppsala, at nine-ear intervals, a general feast of all the ovinces of Sweden . . . The sacrifice is of is nature: of every living thing that male, they offer nine heads, with the ood of which it is customary to placate ds of this sort. The bodies they hang the sacred grove that adjoins the mple . . . Even dogs and horses hang there th men.'

This association of blood with the sac-fice is important. Blood was once thought ot unreasonably) to be the bearer of life, d special measures were taken to conse-ate to the deity the blood of a sacrificial imal or man. In the sacrifices of Viking mes in the North, the main action was take the blood and spread it on the altar d walls of the temple, and sprinkle it on e participants. One Old Norse expression eaning 'to offer sacrifice' is simply 'to dden with blood'. Similar practices are und in many other religions, including at of ancient Israel, where sprinkling ood on the altar was a preliminary to rning the sacrificial beast.

Apart from its significance as an offer-g of life to the deity, the blood-sacrifice so served in some cultures to communicate w life to the fields at the beginning of a w season of growth. A particularly grisly ample is known from the Pawnee Indians. 15-year-old girl was taken and for six onths treated royally; then she was led om hut to hut by the chiefs and warriors, each one being given a gift. Her body was ainted, after which she was killed. Finally er body was cut up and distributed among e cornfields. The spring ritual of the ztecs contained similar elements, while the Toxcatl Festival a young man was crificed to the sun god after having spent year as a quasi-king. In the Americas, the nk between sun worship and blood sacri-ce is particularly noteworthy.

However, the sacrificial practices best nown in the West (at least by repute) re those of the Old Testament. These are

Rex Features

not isolated phenomena: their elements can easily be paralleled from many other cultures. But for at least as long as the Jerusalem Temple stood (that is, down to 70 AD), the sacrificial system was central to Israel's worship. Jewish sacrifices were of many kinds, carefully classified and regulated by the prescriptions and prohibitions of Leviticus. There was the burnt offering, no part of which was available for human consumption, while in the peace offering, some parts of the animal were burned and others were consumed by priests and the worshippers.

The holiest of Jewish sacrifices were those known as sin offering and guilt offering (Leviticus 4.7), in which a broken relationship between man and God was symbolically restored. The entire action of these sacrifices was hedged about with the strictest taboos; for instance, the vessels in which any sacrificial offering had been contained had to be purified most carefully and even, in the case of earthenware vessels, broken.

This same theme – the restoration of the divine-human relationship – is also attested in one of the Jewish seasonal festivals, that of the Day of Atonement, *Yom Kippur,* which has been described as the summit of the Jewish sacrificial system. On this day, bullocks and goats were sacrificed, and their blood sprinkled within the Holy of Holies in the Temple – the only occasion in the year on which even the high priest was permitted to enter this innermost sanctuary. Subsequently the sins of the people were recited over a goat, the so-called 'scapegoat', which was then led away into the desert as an offering to a demon, Azazel (see SCAPEGOAT). In later Jewish practice the animal was thrown over a cliff. However, practices such as these passed out of use early in the Christian era, and today even the solemn Day of Atonement is observed penitentially, rather than sacrificially.

Blood of the Lamb

In the ancient world the practice of sacrifice would often be accompanied by a banquet at which the worshippers would share table fellowship with the god concerned. Meat was eaten; wine or some other intoxicant was drunk. The Canaanites, according to the book of Judges, '. . . went out into the field, and gathered the grapes from their vineyards and trod them, and held festival, and went into the house of their god, and ate and drank . . .' (9.27). 'Consider the practice of Israel,' wrote Paul, 'are not those who eat the sacrifice partners in the altar?' (1 Corinthians 10.18). He went on to stress that to partake of any type of sacrificial banquet was to establish a bond of fellowship with the deity concerned, even though it might be a demon: 'I do not want you to be partners with demons' (10.20).

In Scandinavia, the annual sacrifices to Thor, Odin and Freyr were accompanied by a banquet at which horns were drained to Odin on behalf of the king and to Freyr for a good year and for peace. Incidentally, drunkenness – the rule rather than the exception – might well have contributed to the sense of divinity which the worshippers undoubtedly felt on these occasions. In India, precisely this type of situation is reflected in the soma sacrifice. It is not known for certain from which plant soma was extracted, although it has been suggested that it was the mushroom *Amanita muscaria* (see MUSHROOM), but it is certain that it was the drink of the gods, that it was offered to the gods, and that it was at the same time shared by the worshippers.

Another type of table fellowship is seen in the Jewish celebration of the Passover, which is shared by the family in their home in remembrance of the release of the Israelites from Egypt. The Passover lamb was in later times sacrificed in the Temple, but the meal was an entirely separate concern; it is still the high point of the Jewish ritual year (see JUDAISM).

Early Christian teaching saw the Jewish sacrificial system (and particularly the sacrifices of purification and atonement) as having been summed up in the death of Jesus Christ. Jesus was the 'lamb without blemish or spot' (1 Peter 1.19) offered to take away the sin of the world. He fulfilled the role of the high priest on the Day of Atonement; 'he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood' (Hebrews 9.12). In the vision of John in the book of Revelation he was 'a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain' (5.6). In his death, therefore, the only possible offering for the sin of the world had been made, once and for all, and no further sacrifice need be made. Catholic teaching speaks of 'the Sacrifice of the Mass', and in this way incorporates much of the idea of table fellowship with the deity which accompanies sacrifice. However, there is no assertion that Christ is sacrificed afresh each time the Mass is celebrated: instead it is expressly stated that what is involved is a re-presentation, a continuation and a renewed application of Christ's death.

There have been, at least in the Indian and Western traditions, more or less elaborate protests from time to time against the view of deity which the sacrificial system implies. The Indian protest is made mainly in the interests of a metaphysical doctrine of God as pure Being, who cannot be adequately conceived in the form of an image before which sacrifices might be offered. In many areas of Hinduism, sacrifice is interpreted in a purely spiritual sense as meaning an attitude of faith and devotion

The Western protest might be said to have its roots in the Old Testament, and to rest its case on the priority of the ethica over the ritual in man's relationship to God. Hosea may serve as the spokesman o those Israelite prophets who condemned sacrifice in one form or another (though it may be suspected that they were in fact condemning less the sacrificial system as such than either the Canaanite form of i or a purely mechanical view of its efficacy) Hosea wrote – or said – on behalf of God 'I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice the knowledge of God, rather than burn offerings' (6.6).

Most people today would probably agree with him. The process of secularization has meant many changes in man's view o the world, not least in his conception o the supernatural, and sacrifice can have little place in a world from which the supernatural is so firmly excluded. It must remain an open question whether 'modern man' is right in this. It is certain, however that the symbolical links with the spirit world, which sacrifice regulated and normalized, have been broken.

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Sadducees

Aristocratic and conservative religious party in Judaism at the time of Christ, frequently condemned in the New Testament; they did not believe in life after death, the angels or spirits, or in the authority of the traditional law which had grown up round the written law of Moses; they cooperated with the Roman government which selected successive high priests from their ranks.

See ZEALOTS.

Sadhu

Indian holy man, an ascetic credited with supernatural powers; there are numerous sects and schools of sadhus; some remain in one spot for years, some live in communities, some wander about; many mutilate themselves or mortify their flesh in other ways to gain spiritual merit and power; suicide is often their preferred way of death.

See FAKIR; MADNESS; MEDITATION; SELF-DENIAL; YOGA.

SAGITTARIUS

THE SUN IS IN SAGITTARIUS, the ninth sign of the Zodiac, between 22 or 23 November and 21 or 22 December. Sagittarius is associated with flying and journeys to distant lands, and Sagittarians are generally enthusiastic travellers. Idealism is another of their traits, but this can range from altruism to dangerous fanaticism. Sagittarians can too easily become the worshippers of the law they preach, slaves of ritual and convention.

They may be rebels only for the sake of rebelling; hypocrites in religion; even political turncoats in pursuit of their ambitions. Yet they seldom betray a personal trust, and remain good friends, although their instinct to be outspoken on any subject may cause pain to those close to them.

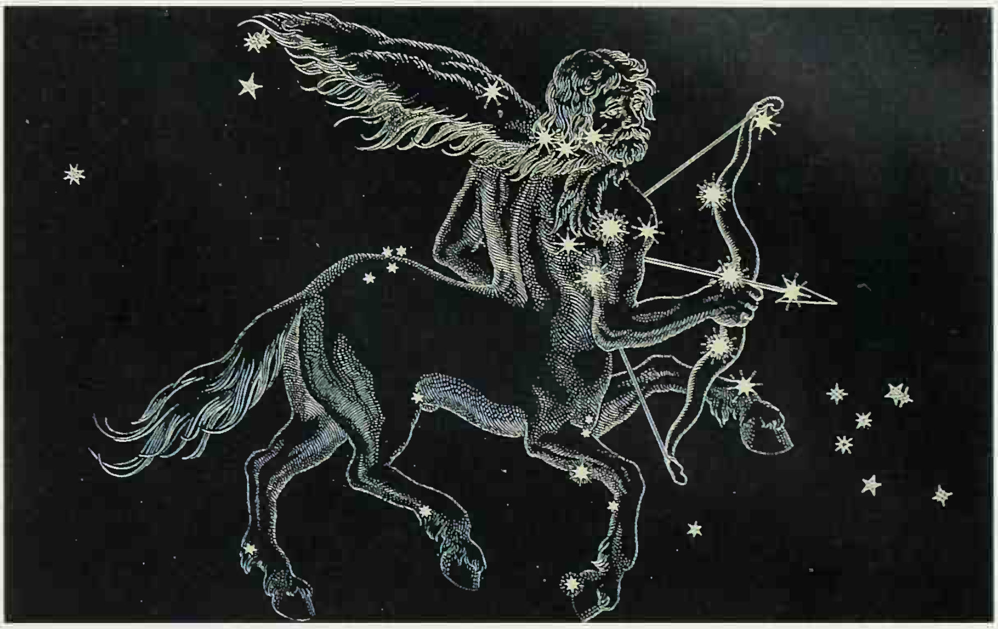
A Sagittarian businessman will never be content with a monotonous job, however well it may pay; he is always eager to progress to something bigger or, supposedly, better. Ambition in Sagittarians varies, from the ruthless desire to amass a large fortune to the natural wish that any person has for success in life.

Hope is another quality which this sign exemplifies, and an individual under its influence will remain optimistic in spite of repeated disappointments. Sagittarians have a strong sporting instinct, believing that it is more fun to take a chance than to be prudent, and gambling is one of the vices that they find especially tempting.

People born with the sun in Sagittarius are usually interested in education, and they often enjoy teaching, particularly of games and sports, and are always pleased to see their pupils making the best of themselves. Other careers include the armed forces, advertising and dealing in horses.

Women born under Sagittarius sometimes find it difficult to express affection. On the whole, however, generosity comes naturally to Sagittarians (provided they themselves are well-protected), for they believe that money and luck will never cease to flow towards them.

Traditionally Sagittarians, though sound in constitution, are inclined to be highly-strung, and may suffer a nervous breakdown. Hips and thighs are susceptible to diseases such as sciatica and rheumatism. The Moon in Sagittarius denotes a lofty and idealistic nature, with a dedication to conventional religion or philosophy; with bad aspects, this may result in narrow-minded bigotry and a 'holier-than-thou' attitude.



SAI BABA

NOBODY EVER KNEW the real name of the Indian holy man Sai Baba (which means 'Saintly Father'), his age or place of origin. Around 1855 he appeared suddenly in the village of Shirdi in the Bombay Presidency. Soon afterwards he disappeared mysteriously for three years, and then returned to Shirdi, where he remained until his death. For 60 years the magnetism of his presence attracted thousands of followers who believed him to be God in human guise.

Sai Baba was one of the most eccentric and unpredictable saints known to history. He smoked foul clay pipes which seemed to play an important part in his spiritual scheme and he abused and even beat his devotees, sometimes flying into terrible rages and hurling imprecations at invisible presences. He lived in a dilapidated mosque, which contained an ever-burning fire, sacred to Hindus and Parsees, and a niche in its western wall indicating the direction of Mecca. This reconciliation of Hindu and Moslem was one of the major features of his work. Christians felt at home with him, too.

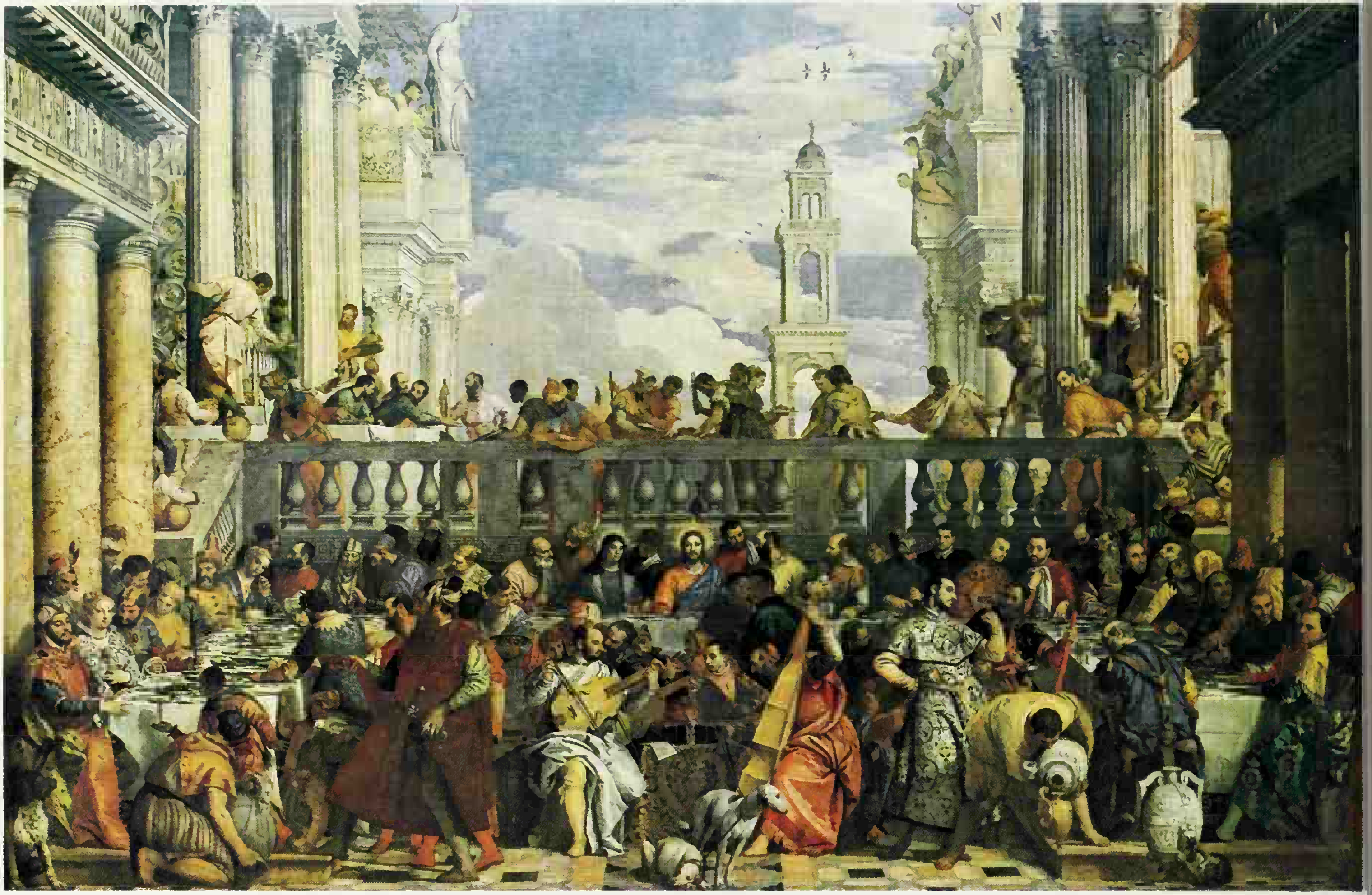
One day, a devotee named Nanasaheb brought Baba a wooden plank to sleep on; suspending it from the rafters with old rags, he slept on it, hammock-wise. The rags were so worn that it was doubtful whether they would bear the weight of the plank, let alone Baba as well. However, he lighted a lamp at each of its four corners, then mounted it for his night's repose. Although many people watched to see how he got up there, nobody ever succeeded. One moment Baba would be on the ground; the next, he appeared to be sleeping on the plank. This soon attracted great crowds, and relays of observers were posted to see if the mystery could be solved. These feats generated faith among people who were unable to accept divinity unaccompanied by 'miracles'.

Baba's devotees frequently sought permission to renovate the mosque but at first he adamantly refused to give it. One day, he declared that work could begin, but during the reconstruction he would often pull down what had been erected and hurl away the stones. Such actions appeared insane to those unacquainted with his methods, but his intimate devotees understood that they had symbolic meaning, that Baba was moulding them according to a divine plan, using the stones as symbolic substitutes for themselves. When the work was finally accomplished, a great holy day was declared in Shirdi, and Sai Baba was carried in procession to the new mosque.

Unlike many saints, Sai Baba encouraged people to ask for the fulfilment of earthly desires; he rebuked those who refrained from asking, knowing that they inwardly cherished such feelings. His idea was, no doubt, to make people realize the futility of earthly satisfaction. He gave them a surfeit, and they realized that happiness and peace did not accompany the acquisition of objects or the fulfilment of desires. He said: 'I give my devotees what they want so that they will come to want what I want to give them.' To the few he taught the highest doctrine of *advaita* (non-dualism, the doctrine that the Ultimate Principle alone has real existence), but people rarely came to him for purely spiritual guidance. He waited patiently, sometimes for years, sometimes in vain, for people to want what he wanted to give.

Like other great spiritual luminaries, Sai Baba 'died' and was reborn into everlasting life while still in his earthly body. In 1886, when he was about 47 years of age, he told a devotee named Mahalsapathy, 'I am going to Allah. Take care of this body for three days. If I return I will look after it myself. If not, bury it in the open land...' Shortly afterwards he was pronounced dead by the civil authorities, and Mahalsapathy was ordered to bury or cremate the body. This he refused to do, and on the third day breath returned to Baba's body, his eyes opened and he returned to life. From this time on his fame began to spread. From 1910 until his final death, streams of visitors descended upon Shirdi, laden with gifts and money which Baba gave away as fast as he received it. He died in October 1918.

More recently, another holy man has taken Sai Baba's name and place, claiming to be a reincarnation. He was born in [illegible] and he too has attracted many followers. His powers include an apparent ability to produce objects from nowhere, including sweets, flowers, photographs and figurines of deities and, for his Christian admirers, crucifixes. He is credited with miraculous healing powers and there are stories of his restoring the dead to life. KENNETH GRANT‡



Despite the numerous legends that surround the Comte de Saint-Germain, little is actually known about him; he achieved a position of influence in the French court of Louis XV, and is said to have appeared in Paris, after his death, prophesying the French Revolution

COMTE DE ST-GERMAIN

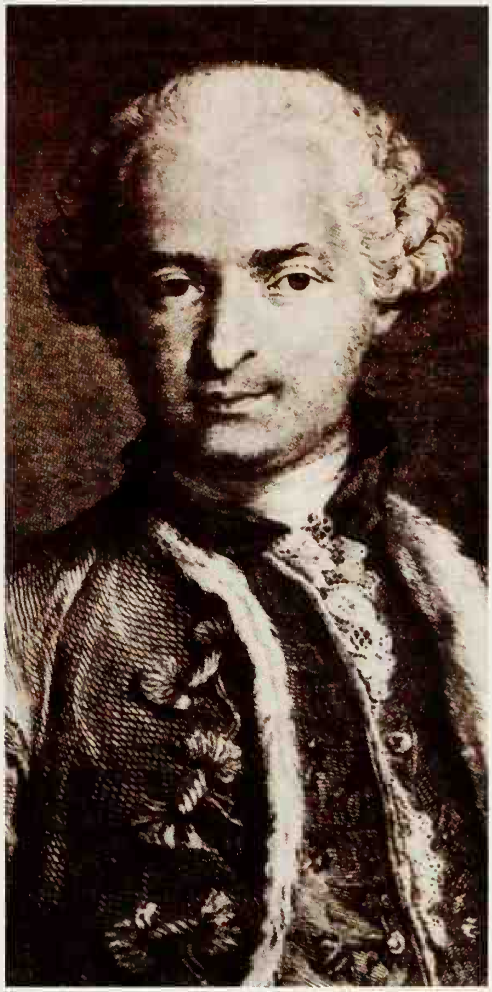
THE MYSTERY surrounding the Comte de Saint-Germain will probably never be resolved. It is known that he died at Eckenforde in Hesse, Germany, on 27 February 1784 – when it was reported that he seemed to be about 80 years old. But Charles of Hesse, his protector, burned all his papers for fear of their being misinterpreted; whilst the fire which broke out in the Hôtel de Ville in Paris in 1871 consumed the records of a commission set up by Napoleon III to investigate the enigmatic Count. One manuscript known to have been in the possession of Saint-Germain was entitled *Holy Magic Revealed,* but nothing is known of its contents. The secrets of the man some said was 2000 years old, and whose aliases were as many as there were jewels in his pockets, went with him to the grave. The sporadic intrusions of Saint-Germain into the realms of historical fact provide the only clues to his origin or nature.

In about 1740 Saint-Germain was brought back to France by the Marshal de Belle-Isle, who had been taken ill whilst campaigning in Germany and had found relief at the hands of Saint-Germain. He provided the self-styled Count – who admitted that the name was false – with a residence and a laboratory. Saint-Germain's reputation as a savant and a miracle-worker grew. He was not only an accomplished healer – in 1744 he cured a lady of the French court of mushroom poisoning – but a virtuoso on the violin, a notable performer on the clavichord, and a painter of very acceptable oils. These were distinguished by the extraordinary quality that his technique could give to the representation of jewellery, which glittered on the canvas as it did in real life. Saint-Germain soon ingratiated himself with Madame de Pompadour, the mistress of Louis XV, who perhaps saw in this man of mystery a device to amuse the jaded king. For Louis, Saint-Germain repaired flawed diamonds, revived a girl who had poisoned herself rather than submit to her sovereign's demands, and solved a notorious murder case, apparently by clairvoyance.

The Count's influence proved unwelcome to the king's Foreign Minister, the Duc de Choiseul, who attempted to make capital out of his propensity for mystification. An impersonator named Gauve was employed to appear in the salons of Paris dressed in clothes stolen from Saint-Germain, and exaggerating the Count's known foibles. This imposter claimed to have known Christ personally – 'I always said he would come to a bad end' – and to have known others of the Holy Family, like St Anne, whose canonization he had forwarded at the Council of Nicaea. Once, when asked for information on a point of ancient history, the impersonator turned to his 'valet', who claimed ignorance of the subject: 'Perhaps the Count forgets that I have been in his service only 500 years.'

Although the Count himself sometimes claimed superhuman age, most of the more excessive claims attributed to Saint-Germain can be traced to the activities of Gauve. The disaster that cast down the Count from his position of favour was also the result of Choiseul's enmity. In 1760 the Count was sent to Holland as the king's personal emissary to organize a loan to cover the ruinous expense of the War of the Austrian Succession: whether or not it was part of his commission, he also busied himself with trying to arrange a separate peace with England. Choiseul chose to regard this as high treason, and applied for his extradition to France. Saint-Germain fled, leaving behind a sword-belt and two bottles containing an unidentifiable liquid.

The Count first tried England as a refuge, but was not made welcome. He passed through Prussia and seems to have appeared, using the name of Odart, at the side of Catherine the Great and the brothers Orlov in their successful revolt against the Tsar. After this fresh venture into politics, Saint-Germain's ambitions seem to have become less vaulting; he is reported to have been involved in establishing factories for developing colouring processes, presumably along the lines of his miraculous oil-paints. The first was in Tournai in Belgium,



Radio Times Hulton Picture Library

Left The Comte de Saint-Germain was said to have been more than 2000 years old; a friend of the Holy Family, he was a wedding guest at Cana when Christ turned the water into wine: *The Marriage at Cana* by Veronese **Right** The aliases of the Comte de Saint-Germain were said to have been as numerous as the jewels in his pocket; a healer and miracle-worker, he was adopted by the Theosophical Society as one of their 'Masters', a band of perfected men who attempt to guide mankind

whilst two were set up in Russia, and a further pair in Germany. Charles, the ruler of Hesse, who was the patron of every passing teacher of mystical doctrines, became Saint-Germain's enthusiastic supporter. On the Count's deathbed Charles tried to persuade him to abjure the heretical conviction that his spirit would be re-absorbed in the All.

Many speculations have been advanced as to who and what Saint-Germain was. He himself frequently claimed to be a Count Rakoczi, exiled from his native Transylvania; but of the three possible Rakoczis, all died at historically established dates. Romantic speculation made him the son of the promiscuous Queen of Spain and the tenor Mateucci.

One of the most ingenious theories connects the Count with the Stuarts. It is pointed out that the palace at which they held their court in exile was that of Saint-Germain-en-Laye in France. It is also true that in 1745 Saint-Germain was in London, and was compromised by being found in possession of a Jacobite letter. His unlikely defence – that he had been framed – was accepted. But even implication in Jacobite politics does not prove that Saint-Germain had any blood tie with the House of Stuart. It might merely have been yet another of the Count's shadowy excursions into the borderland of intrigue and diplomacy.

The 18th century was an age of traffickers in spiritual commodities, and it is as an occultist that Saint-Germain has been chiefly remembered. Heterodox and pantheistic in his religious opinions, the Count certainly possessed medical and chemical knowledge which was valued highly by his contemporaries. But although he was a Freemason, he did not interest himself unduly in the Craft. It is not unjustifiable to call him an alchemist, for he stands in the middle ground between religion and science which alchemy itself occupies.

After his death, the Count was supposedly seen in Paris prophesying the French Revolution, and in Vienna foretelling the advent of Napoleon. In the 19th century he was adopted by the Theosophical Society as one of their 'Masters', the select band of perfected men who were supposed to watch over humanity (see MASTERS). Despite all the legends which have gathered round his figure, all that can safely be said of him is inscribed on his tombstone: 'He who called himself the Count de Saint-Germain and Welldone of whom there is no other information, has been buried in this Church.'

JAMES WEBB

ST JOHN'S WORT

IN HIS *Herball* of 1525, Banckes wrote that if St John's wort was put in a house, no wicked spirit would be able to enter. *Hypericum perforatum* and its relations seem to have had this reputation for many centuries: *Fuga Daemonum* in medieval Latin, they are known as Devil's Bane in the West Country, and in France as *Chasse-diable* and also *tutsan*, from *toute-saine*, or 'all-heal'. Although the healing names seem to be partly the result of confusing the plant with another one, belief in the property of St John's wort to chase out devils is clearly ancient. It was also thought to give protection against enchantment, against 'second sight', the Evil Eye, and even death. Some people claimed to be able to see witches at their evil doings when armed with St John's wort. The plant was also said to prevent fire and divert thunderbolts.

Witches could of course use such plants, although there was the risk that the magic might recoil. Reginald Scot, writing in 1584, describes how the ghost of a hanged man was raised by using a hazel wand bound with St John's wort and with an owl's head fixed at the end.

The plant had to be treated with respect, and one tale tells how anyone stepping on St John's wort risked a fairy horse appearing beneath him and carrying him away. It would gallop all night long, and vanish at dawn leaving the rider stranded.

Perhaps because its shining golden flowers look as bright as the sun, the plant was chief among those regarded as effective against evil around Midsummer Day, when elves, fairies and spirits are likely to be especially active (see MIDSUMMER EVE). Some authorities believe that an ancient magic fire ceremony was held at the summer solstice. Although the dates do not coincide exactly, this ritual seems to have been celebrated on St John's Eve and Day (23 and 24 June) and bonfires were certainly lit on St John's Eve. The smoke was as important as the flames, for it purifies, and the magic of plants that are already powerful and protective is enhanced when they are passed through the smoke. St John's wort was chief among herbs smoked on that day. These include bracken, corn marigold, daisy, dwarf elder, fennel, ivy, male fern, mugwort, orpine, vervain and yarrow, many of which were credited with magical properties in their own right. Their only link with St John's wort was presumably that they flowered or matured around the solstice.

The herbs had to be picked before sunrise on 23 June, with the magical dew upon them. Once they had been smoked, they would be fixed to buildings, worn on the person, or made into medicine, as a protection against witchcraft and any form of evil.

The date of St John the Baptist's birth links him with the summer solstice, while Christ called him 'a burning and shining lamp'. The golden flowers of the *Hypericum* and its red juice – reminiscent of the blood shed at St John's beheading – fitted well. In Ireland the plant is often associated with St Columba, who modelled himself on the Baptist. One of its Irish names, *achlasan Chaluimchilee*, means literally 'armpit package of Columba', referring to the custom of carrying the plant, like an amulet, under the left armpit.

Red dots can be seen if the leaves are held up to the light – hence the description *perforatum* – and these are sometimes said to have been made by the Devil with a needle. They were supposed to appear on 27 August, the day St John was reputedly beheaded, and are in any case reminiscent of wounds. As a result the plant acquired the reputation of being of therapeutic value and was used in folk medicine. It was believed to cure depression, melancholy and delusions, as well as killing pain and healing wounds. A balm was made of the leaves steeped in olive oil, and a salve from the flowers, which were also said to keep illness from children and make women fertile. If a childless woman picked a flower while walking naked in her garden, she could expect a child before the next Midsummer.

St John's wort was also used in love charms. A flower picked before dawn on St John's Eve, and placed under a girl's pillow that night would make her dream of the man she would marry. In spite of all its old virtues, St John's wort represents superstition and animosity in the Victorian language of flowers.

SAINTS

THERE IS no single authoritative catalogue of saints. If one existed, it would include a remarkable diversity of men and women, rich and poor, theologians and mystics, scholars and men of action, missionaries and recluses, and some who may never have lived at all. There are saints who seem to have been figures of pagan myth originally, like Bride or Brigit of Ireland (see BRIGID) and an obscure St Hippolytus who was dragged to death by horses, as was his namesake, a son of the Greek hero Theseus. There are saints who are certainly Christian but largely legendary, like Joseph of Arimathea, who brought the Grail to Britain (see GLASTONBURY; GRAIL); saints whose real lives can be more clearly discerned behind the veils of legend, like Patrick (5th century), the missionary to Ireland, or Columba (6th century), who converted the Picts in Scotland and founded the monastery of Iona: and such fully real and formidable saints as Augustine of Hippo (d. 430), sometime Manichean heretic, theologian of immense influence and author of *The City of God*; Benedict, architect of Western monasticism in the 6th century; Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), the great philosopher, known as 'the Angelic Doctor'; 'the Seraphic Doctor', Bonaventura, Franciscan cardinal who died in the same year as Aquinas; Ignatius Loyola (d. 1556), Basque soldier and patron saint of soldiers, founder of the Society of Jesus and author of the famous *Spiritual Exercises*.

Among the ranks of the saints are the visionary St Bernadette, canonized in 1933 (see LOURDES), and a visionary of a rather different temper, St Joan of Arc (see JOAN OF ARC); the cheerful, laughter-loving St Philip Neri (d. 1595), who devoted himself to work among young people in Rome, and the French St Vincent de Paul (d. 1660), who worked among convicts and the poor; St Francis Xavier (d. 1552), Spanish Jesuit missionary in the Far East, and another Spanish Jesuit, St Peter Claver (d. 1654), missionary to Negro slaves in South America; St Mary Goretti, raped and murdered at the age of 12, in 1902, and canonized in 1950; and St Simeon Stylites (5th century), famous for living on top of a pillar (see SIMEON STYLITES).

The much-beloved St Francis of Assisi was the son of a rich Italian merchant (see FRANCIS OF ASSISI). St Teresa of Liseux (d. 1897) was the daughter of a French watchmaker and has been described as 'the most popular saint of modern times', who showed that 'sainthood is attainable by anybody, however obscure, lowly, untalented, "ordinary", by the doing of small things and the discharge of daily duties in a perfected spirit of love for God'.

The first saint of the New World to be canonized, in 1671, was St Rose of Lima (d. 1617), who cared for poor Indians and slaves. In North America, the first United States citizen to be canonized, in 1946, was St Frances Cabrini (d. 1917), an Italian nun who in 1950 was declared patroness of all emigrants by Pope Pius XII.

In the earliest use of the word, the saints were all those who followed Christ, and the use of the term to mean all faithful believers was revived long afterwards by the Puritans and later still by the Mormons. But 'saint' rapidly became a title for individual Christians who had particularly distinguished themselves by heroism, by the quality of their lives and, very importantly, by miracles. Belief in miracles is out of fashion now but through most of the centuries of Christianity a saint was someone whose close relationship with the divine order was demonstrated by the setting aside of the natural order. In theology, of course, a saint does not himself work miracles or himself answer prayers addressed to him. Miracles are the work of God and the saint intercedes with God to grant the petitions of the faithful. But at popular levels of belief saints have often been treated as minor deities in their own right, and Protestants criticize what they regard as exaggerated and superstitious reverence for them.

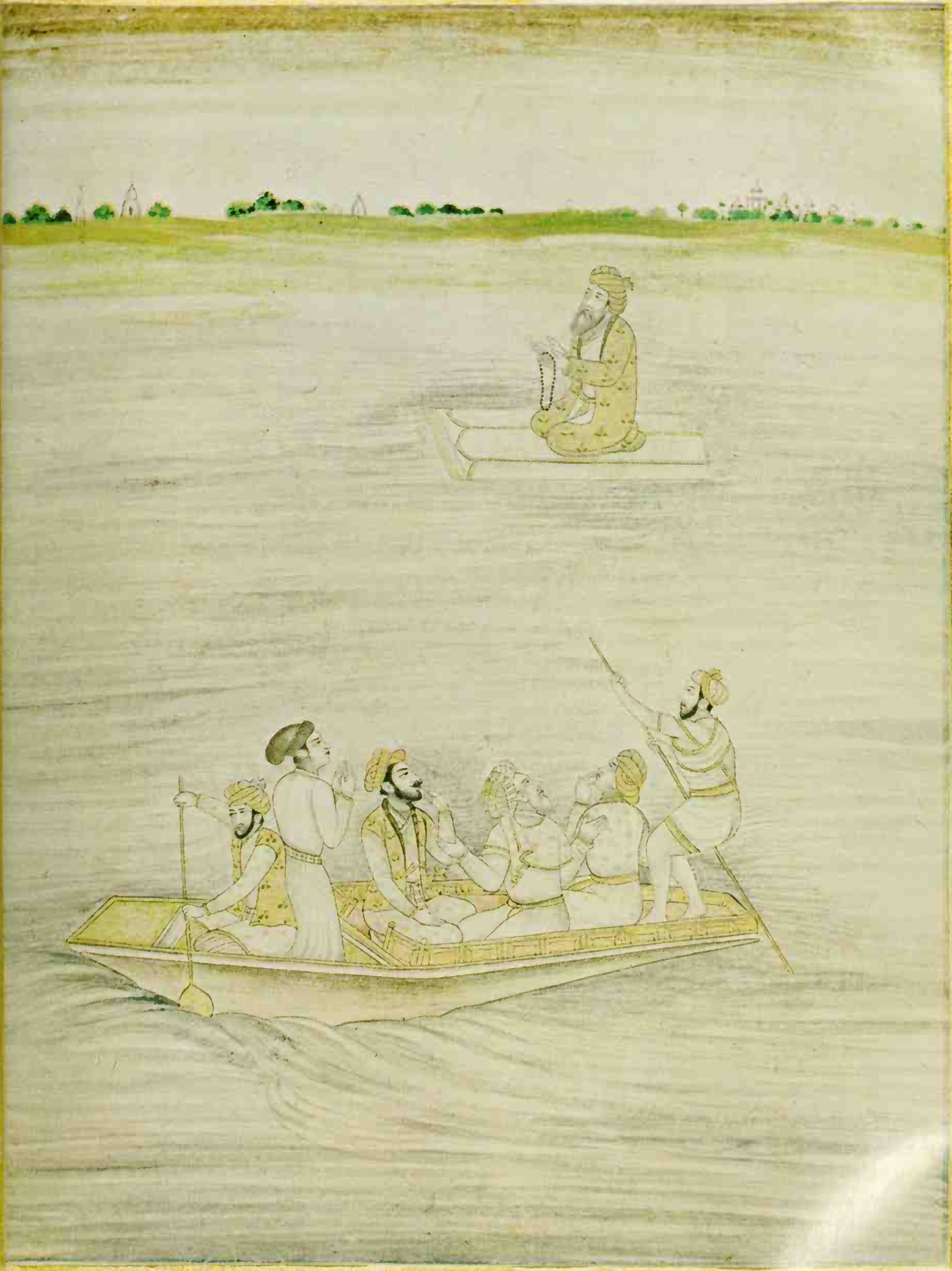
Many Christians have felt a strong spiritual attraction for a particular saint, to whom they have become especially devoted. Children, places, animals, plants and diseases are named for saints, and churches are dedicated to them. Each saint has a feast day once a year, on which his memory is honoured. He may be the 'patron' of a country, a city,

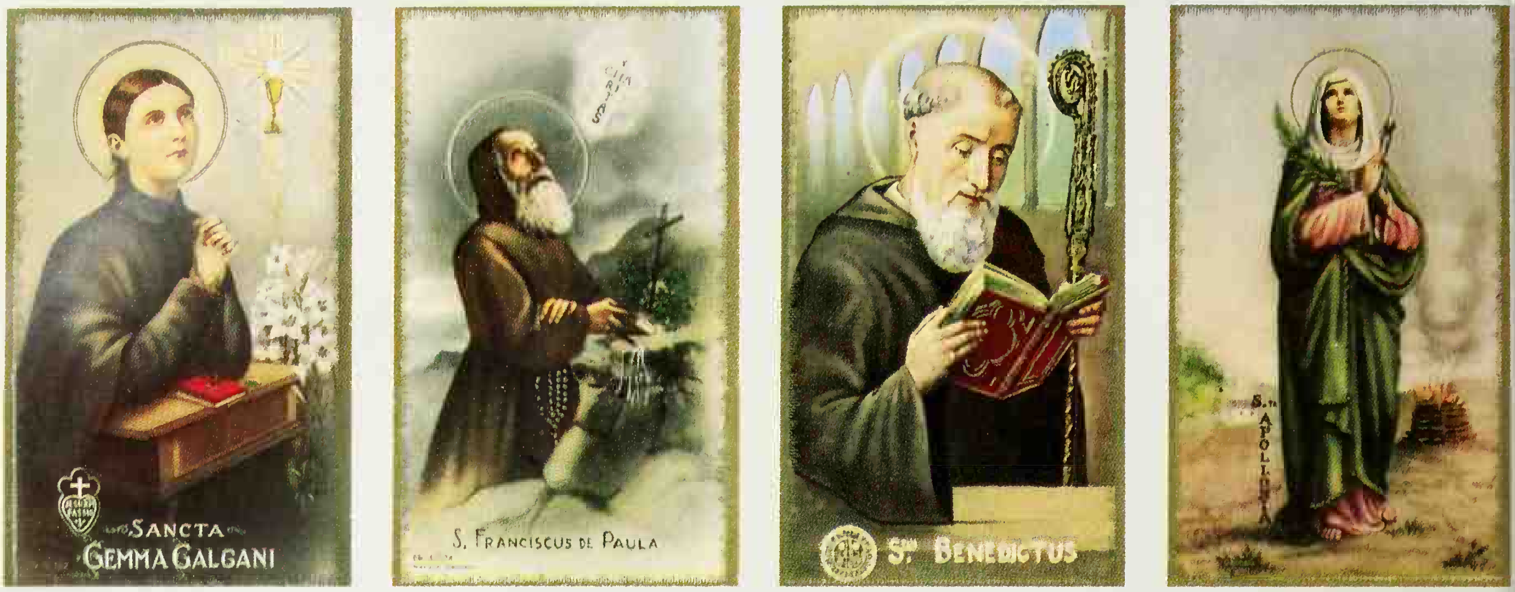
Holy men of all religions are credited with the ability to work miracles, a gift that was thought to demonstrate their close relationship with the divine order: Mogul miniature illustrating the legend of a dervish who, unable to pay the ferryman's fee, crossed a river on his praying mat

St Agnes

The parents of Agnes were rich Christians, much respected, with houses in Rome and in the country. When she was 13 years old a Roman officer, Sempronius, wished to marry her, but she refused him with the explanation that she was already betrothed to one greater than any earthly suitor. Her parents explained that refusal meant death, but Agnes repeated that she wished to give her life to Christ. Sempronius's father, a Prefect, sent soldiers to fetch Agnes and her parents. As she still refused to marry his son, he ordered her to burn incense and become a Vestal Virgin. Agnes made the sign of the cross and overthrew the image. The Prefect then ordered her to be turned naked into the street for everyone to mock at, but her hair fell round her like a cloak and an angel came and brought her a pure white robe, striking Sempronius when he tried to seize her. The onlookers then began to clamour: 'Burn the witch'. So Agnes was dragged to the market-place and a fire built round her, but, as the flames leapt up, she prayed, and as she did so the flames died down and the fire went out. Finally she was sent before a judge, who condemned her to be beheaded. Her parents buried her in the cemetery gallery on the Via Nomentana and a church in her honour has stood there since 354. This was built by Constantia, a daughter of the Emperor Constantine, after she had acquired the ground containing the tomb. This church has been constantly restored and embellished by Popes. A week after her death Agnes appeared, carrying a lamb, and told her parents how happy she was in Paradise. On her feast two white lambs are solemnly blessed in her church and sent to the Pope. They are sheared and their wool is used by nuns for weaving the pallia which are given to all Western Archbishops.

Mary Sharp *Saints in Europe*





Saints are distinguished by the quality of their lives, their heroism and their ability to perform miracles; those revered today include some legendary figures who may never have lived at all, as well as fully real men and women *Above, left to right* St Gemma Galgani, canonized because of the holiness of her life; St Francis de Paul, patron of Naples; St Benedict, founder of Western monasticism; St Apollonia: disfigured and martyred in the 3rd century, she is invoked against toothache, and her emblem is a forceps gripping a tooth *Right* One of the best-loved of all the saints is St Francis of Assisi; the son of a rich family, he gave away his inheritance to 'wed Lady Poverty': St Francis driving demons out of Arezzo, a fresco by Giotto in the Basilica Superiore, Assisi

Recognition of a person as a saint required convincing evidence of his holiness of life, and of miracles obtained through his intercession

a profession, a sport or almost any other activity, in the sense that he has a particular care for that place or activity. He may also have a sphere of influence in which he can be usefully 'invoked' or prayed to. A familiar example is the apostle St Jude, to whom people pray in situations of crisis and desperation. Another is St Anthony (d. 1231), a Portuguese Franciscan who was buried at Padua in Italy, where numerous miracles are attributed to his intercession. He is invoked to help find lost property. The other famous St Anthony, the 4th century desert hermit (see ANTHONY), became patron saint of swineherds and the smallest piglet in a litter was vowed to him (and was called an 'Anthony'): he also gave his name to an inflammation of the skin, erysipelas or St Anthony's Fire, of which many people were cured by his intercession in 1089.

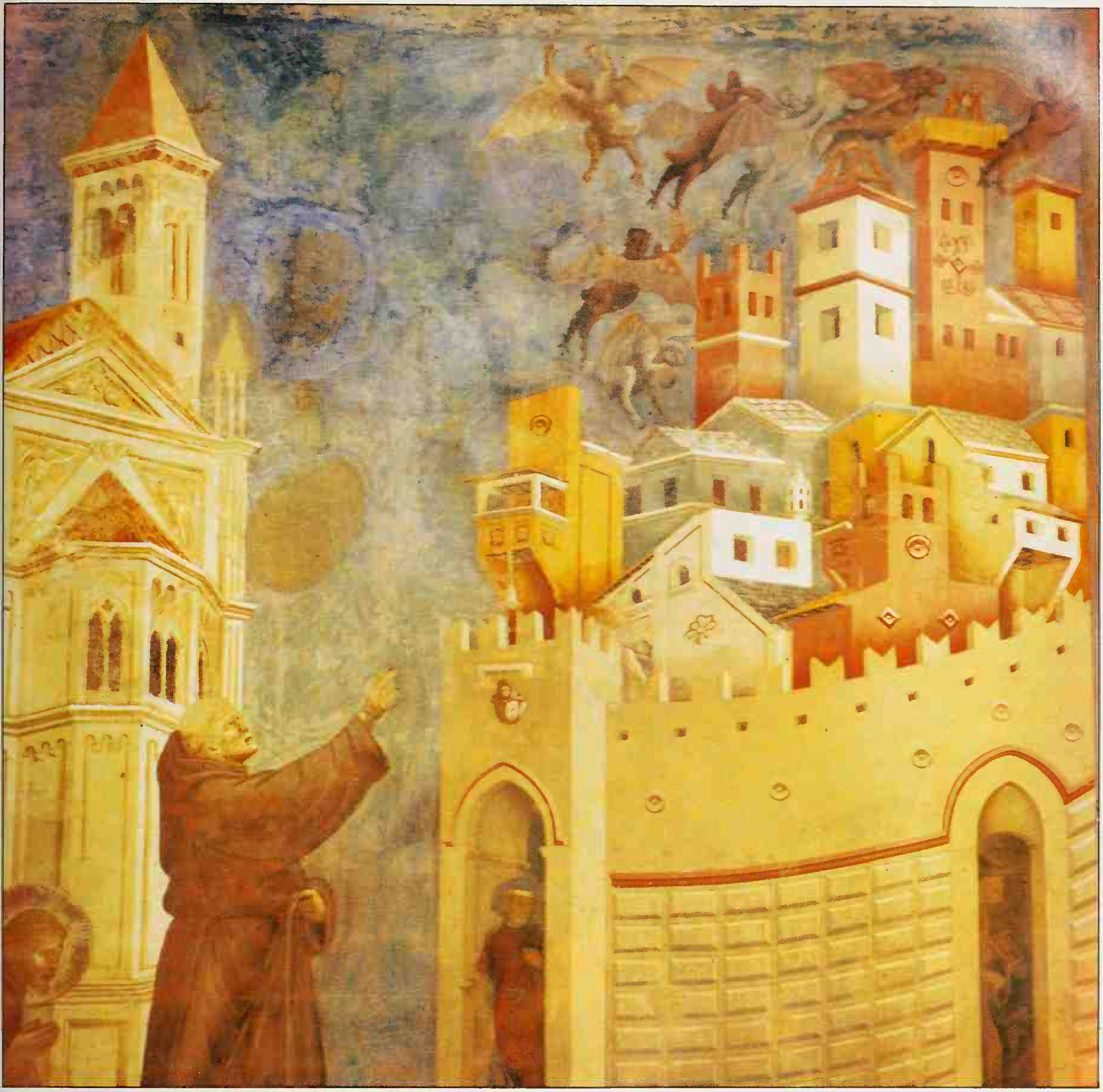
A saint may have been canonized, or formally recognized as a saint by the Church after due investigation, or he may have been venerated as a saint long before the adoption of formal canonization procedures. All the earliest saints, the Virgin Mary (see MARY) and the apostles, and the martyrs who died in the persecutions during the first centuries of Christianity, naturally fall in the second category. St Peter, St Paul (see PAUL), St Mary Magdalen and many others are well known from the New Testament. About others very little is reliably known but legends about them, especially about their deaths, have attracted pious admiration and the attentions of artists. St Laurence, for example, was martyred at Rome in 258, possibly by beheading, but by the following century he was said to have been roasted on a gridiron: after a while he sardonically told his tormentors to turn him over, as he was cooked enough on one side, and he became the patron saint of cooks. Constantine the Great built a church over his grave, and Philip II of Spain dedicated to him the great palace-monastery of the Escurial, built in gratitude for a battle won on the saint's feast day.

St Sebastian became patron saint of archers and arrowsmiths because of the story that he was riddled with arrows and left for dead: he survived the ordeal only to be clubbed to death. In 826 his relics were moved from Italy to Soissons in France, where they attracted pilgrims. The martyred body of St Catherine of Alexandria, one of the most popular saints of the Middle Ages, was carried by angels to the top of Mount Sinai, where the Emperor Justinian built a monastery dedicated to her. She had been condemned to be broken on a spiked wheel but it flew to pieces at her touch and she was beheaded: hence the Catherine wheel, her emblem of a wheel with projecting spikes, and also a kind of firework. She became the patron saint of wheelwrights.

Some martyrs are known for their curious or gruesome symbols. St Lucy, martyred at Syracuse in the early 4th century, was invoked against diseases of the eye and represented holding two eyes in a dish, probably because her name connected her with the Latin for 'light', *lux*. St Agatha of Catania, in Sicily, is shown bearing a pair of breasts on a dish, because one of the tortures to which she was subjected was the cutting off of her breasts. The breasts looked like bells and she became the patron of bell-founders.

Among the saints who were in some sense forerunners of Jesus are Joseph, the Virgin Mary's husband, her parents, Joachim and Anna, John the Baptist, and his parents, Zachary and Elizabeth. Another small category of saints consists of three archangels – Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. St Michael, who led the hosts of God against the rebel angels in the war in heaven, was invoked in battle or temptation and many churches were dedicated to him (see also ANGELS).

On the heels of the veneration of martyrs came the recognition of 'confessors', saints



G. Tomsich/Spectrum

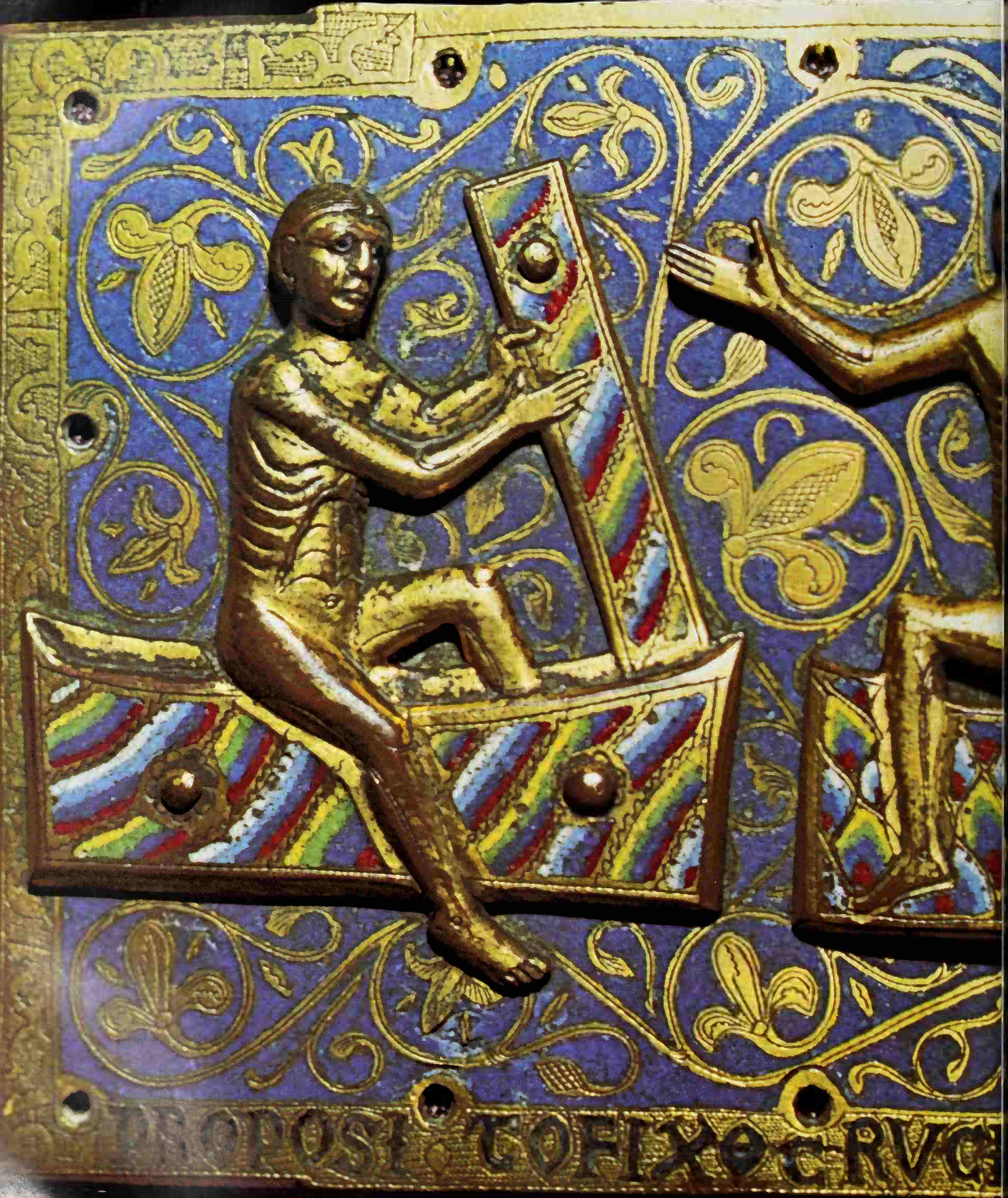
who confronted life with equal heroism though not executed for their faith. Legends gathered about them too, and with the growth of Christianity there was a natural demand for biographies of the saints, with accounts of their teachings and the miracles and wonders associated with them. A very early surviving piece of hagiology, or hagiography, is the letter written by the Christians of Smyrna in Asia Minor, describing the martyrdom of their bishop, St Polycarp, who was burned alive in 155. Later, the monasteries produced lives of saints in massive profusion for the inspiration and edification of the faithful.

As the number of saints multiplied, attempts to prevent the paying of honours to unreal or unworthy or heretical Christians, and to stop the unscrupulous from making money out of their shrines and relics, eventually led to formal canonization procedures. In the Roman Catholic Church, by the 13th century the sole right to canonize was reserved to the papacy and it was accepted that recognition of a person as a saint required convincing evidence of his holiness of life and of miracles obtained through his intercession. The modern process of canonization takes the form of a law suit, in which the pope is the final judge. The case for the candidate is presented by the 'postulator' and it is the duty of the 'promoter of the faith', popularly known as 'the Devil's advocate', to draw attention to weak points in the case. Two lower ranks than saints have been instituted, those of 'venerable' and 'blessed'.

Saints and Animals

It has long been believed that certain individuals are endowed with power over animals or have a special rapport with them. In Eastern faiths as well as in Christianity there are traditions of close relationships between holy men and animals. The doctrine of *Ahimsa* enjoined avoidance of injury to other living beings, and belief in reincarnation led to the impulse not to hurt or kill an animal such as one might oneself become in another incarnation.

Throughout the centuries the desire to meditate in solitude induced men (and women, but to a lesser extent) to live in hermitages in wild places, where they came into close contact with birds and beasts. The tradition is represented in Judaism by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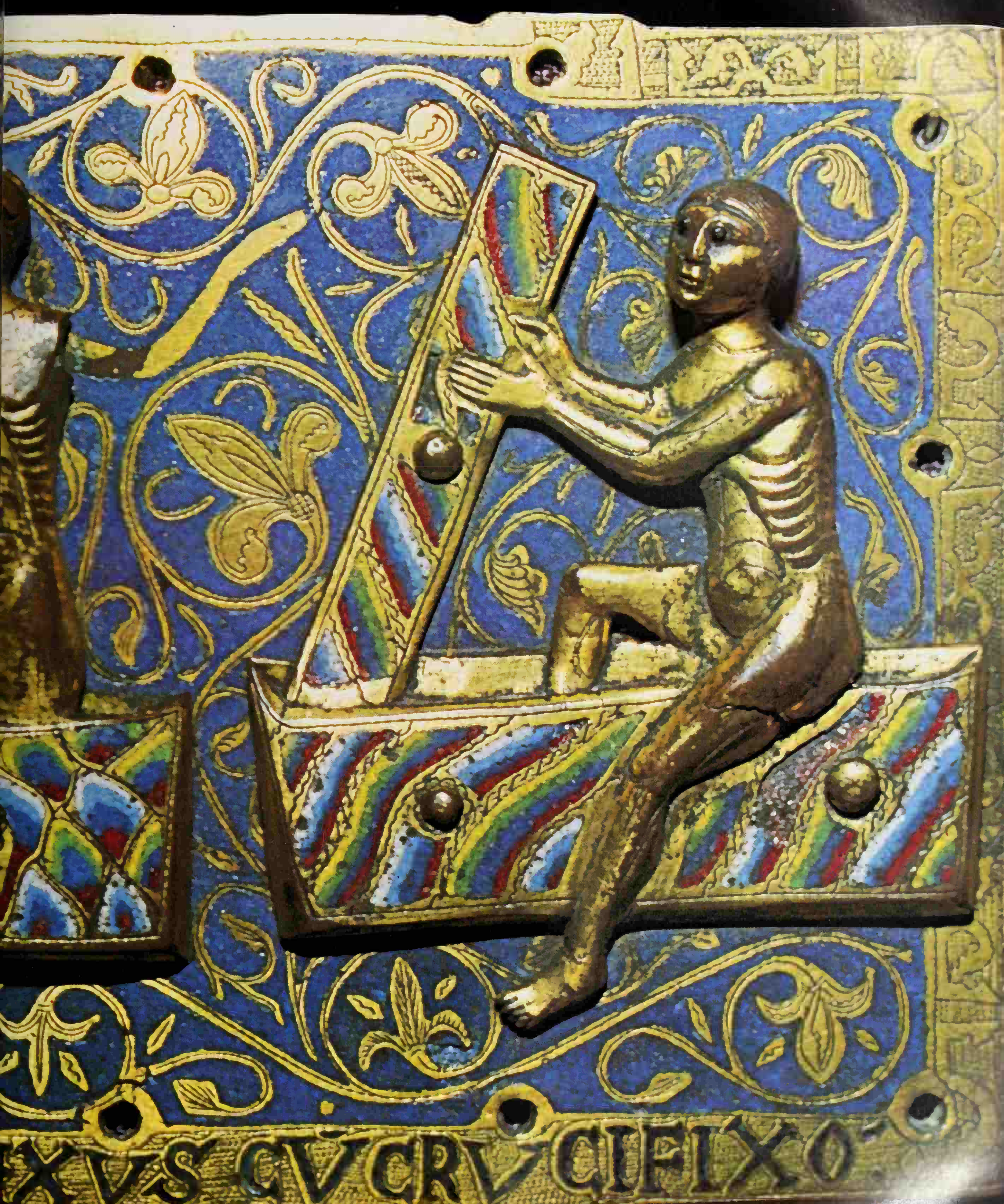
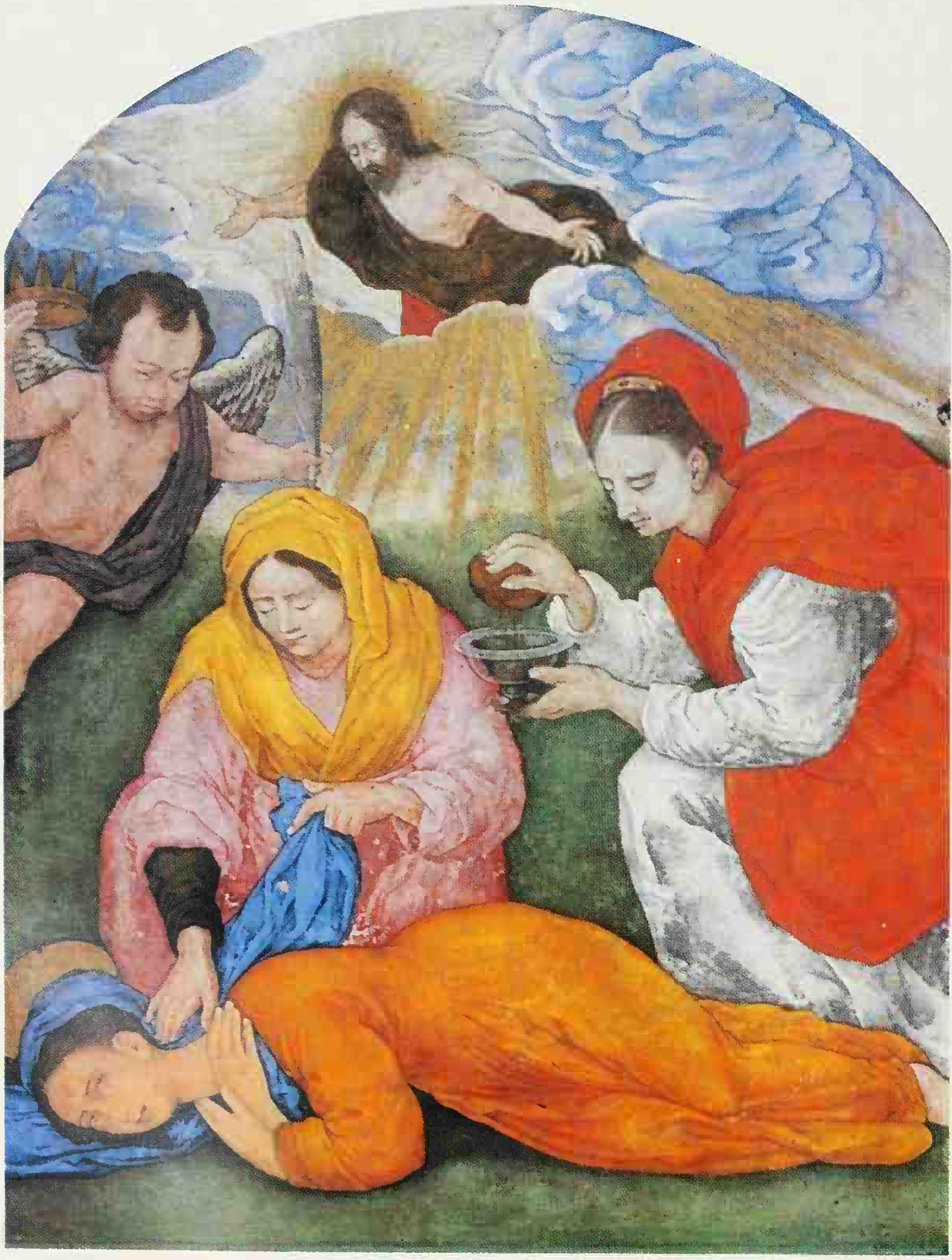


'. . . the tombs also were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised': in this description (Matthew 27.52) of the events that followed Jesus's death on the cross, the term 'saints' means those who believed in Christ: part of a 13th century enamelled casket from France, showing the saints rising from their graves. Victoria and Albert Museum

When a wild boar was discovered raiding gardens, William Firmat led it to his cell and released it in the morning, admonishing it to discontinue its destructive activities



Victoria & Albert Museum/C. M. Dixon

The martyrs who died in the persecutions during the first centuries of Christianity were venerated as saints *Above* St Cecilia was said to have taken three days to die after a soldier had failed to behead her properly: *Martyrdom of St Cecilia* by Naini *Facing page* St Maurice *(right)*, a Roman legion commander, was killed by the Romans because he refused to attend a sacrifice and St Elmo *(left)* was put to death by having his bowels drawn out on a windlass: painting by Mathias Grunewald

the story of the ravens which fed Elijah (1 Kings, chapter 17).

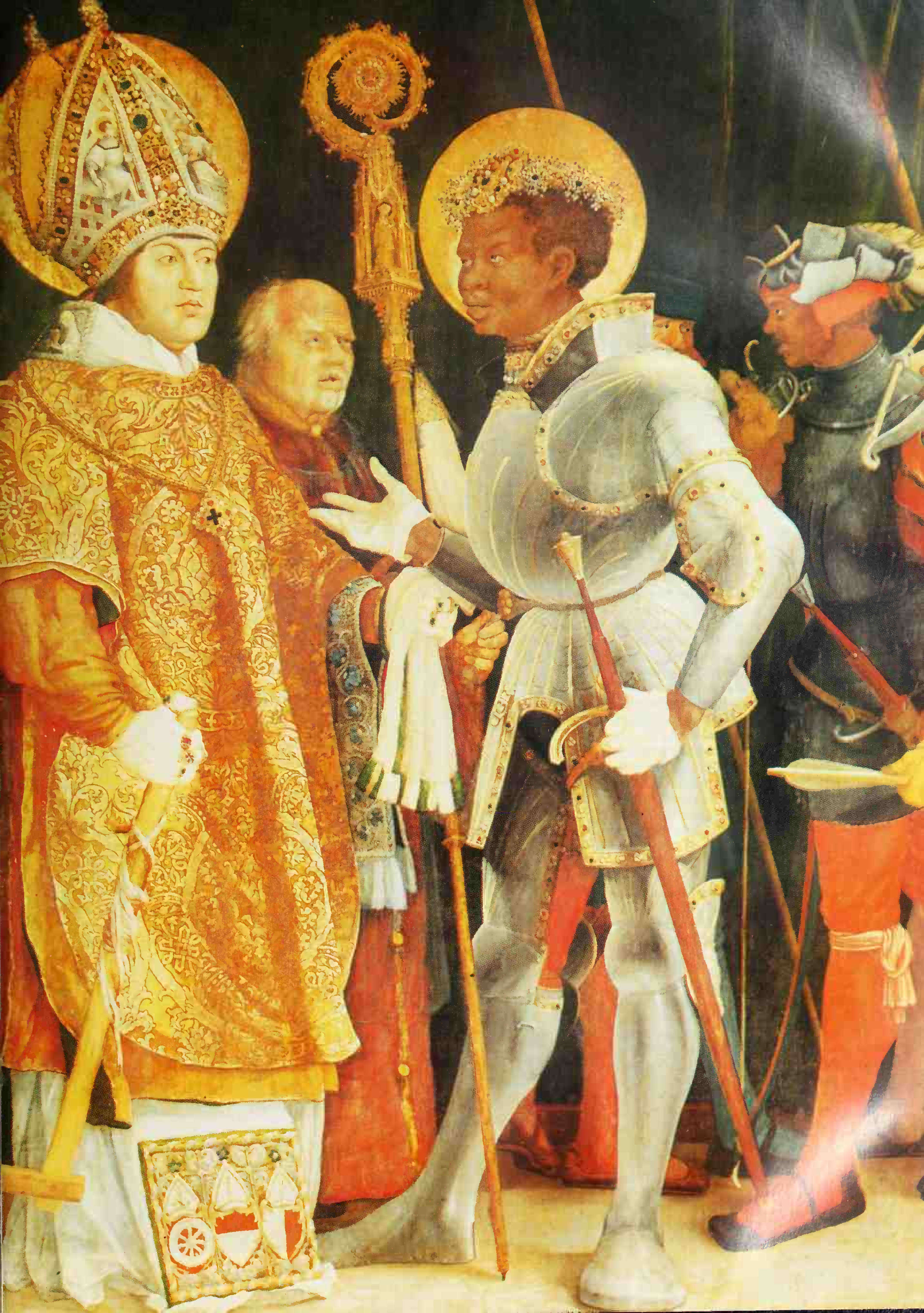
When numbers of Christian hermits established themselves in the Egyptian desert, many stories of their friendly relationships with animals were recorded. These vary from perfectly credible accounts of lonely men making pets of wild creatures to exaggerated tales such as the fable of the two lions which helped St Anthony to bury his friend Paul the Hermit by digging a grave in the hard desert soil.

Such legends encouraged the growth of similar stories during the Middle Ages, some based on fact, others emphasizing the miraculous power of the saint more than his compassion. It is possible that, as stated in St Malo's biography, a wren nested in the habit which he had laid aside on a bush, but according to a later, exaggerated version of this theme, a blackbird nested in St Kevin's hand as he held it forth from his hermitage.

Medieval religious writers were not concerned with exact natural history but told animal stories because of their moral and edificatory value. Many of them may be regarded as parables. The legends concerning the relationships between saints and animals deal with such topics as the expulsion or taming of dangerous creatures, co-operation with them and compassion for them. Sometimes animals are represented as having an oracular function or acting as a saint's guide, protector or comforter.

A common theme is the expulsion of some dangerous or noxious animal by a saint. The creatures killed or banished vary from the dragons slain by St George and St Michael to the snakes driven from Ireland by St Patrick and birds, mice and locusts expelled by other saints. More often than not Christian saints banish, subdue or tame animals rather than slay them. St Columban did not kill the bear which had eaten an ox but harnessed it to a wagon in place of its victim. A wild boar which had been raiding gardens was kindly handled by William Firmat. He led it by the ear to his cell and released it in the morning, admonishing it to discontinue its destructive activities.

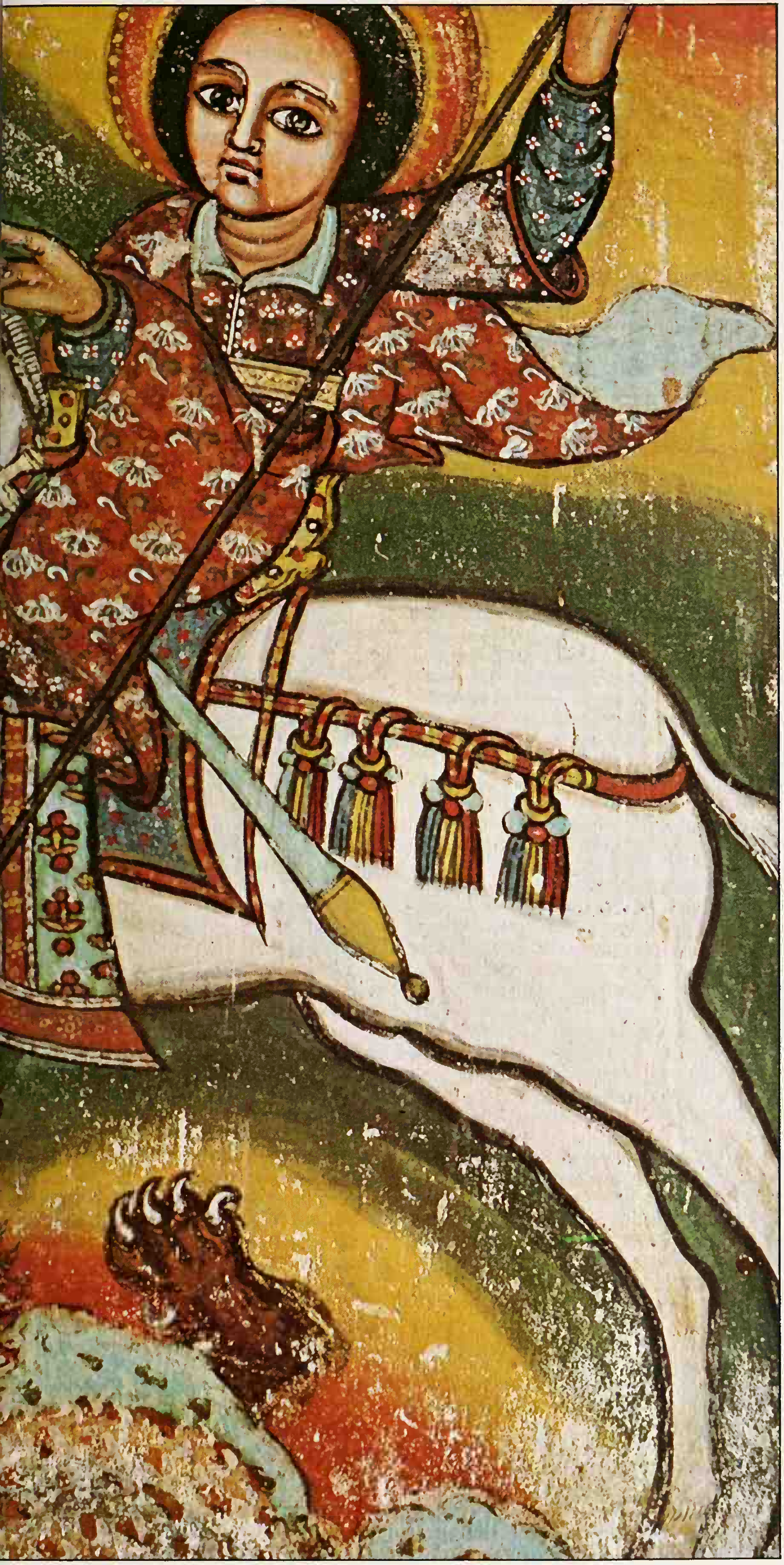
There are many legends of saints acting as benefactors by commanding predatory beasts to return their prey, such as calves and sheep. A number tell of wolves bringing back the children they had carried away.



The compassion of saints is emphasized in stories relating how hunted animals sought sanctuary with them. Another theme describes the saint's ministrations to and healing of a wounded beast. But among the legends are many telling of the compassion of animals for holy men and help given them. A buffalo cow provided milk for Cyriacus, a wolf tended the child Albeus when he was abandoned in the forest, an otter came to warn St Cuthbert after he had kept vigil in the sea, and wild beasts protected the monastery of Barking when it was attacked by the Danes. Not all such tales are fantastic. There is no reason to doubt the touching account of the old white horse on Iona which nuzzled St Columba affectionately shortly before he died.

The tradition of a happy relationship between men and animals is particularly prominent in Celtic areas, partly due to the actual experiences of hermits. Living on islands frequented by sea birds and in the woods, these men became accepted as part of the natural fauna and only a little imaginative exaggeration was necessary to make the contacts between man and animal into edifying and entertaining stories. We hear of St Ciaran of Clonmacnois living in the forest with a number of animals as in a kind of religious community, with Brother Fox, Brother Badger and others. St Colman enjoyed the friendship of a cock, a mouse and a fly. The cock acted as an alarm clock to proclaim that it was time to get up for services, the mouse nibbled his ear if the cock's summons proved insufficient, and the fly kept the saint's place in his book when he was called away from his reading. Such stories are not to be regarded as expressions of credulity but as indications of kindliness and a sense of humour.

The theme of men and animals, especially birds, praising God together constantly appears in Christian literature. Irish legends, as in the narrative of St Brendan's voyage (see BRENDAN), tell of flocks of birds singing like human choirs. St Francis of Assisi not only preached to the birds but sang duets with a nightingale and a cicada. Such stories indicate the joyousness of the saints and their sympathy with wild life but they are not as naive as they might appear [illegible]. Although the tale of St Anthony of Padua's sermon to the fish at Rimini might seem merely a far-fetched version of St



A saint may be especially concerned with a particular city or country, or with a specific activity, sport or profession *Left* St George is the patron saint of England and of soldiers and boy scouts. Although he is probably one of the most famous of the early martyrs, no historical particulars of his life have survived, and the well-known story of his rescuing a maiden from a dragon is a late medieval addition to the legends that surround him: St George and the dragon, a mural in Ethiopia

John Moss

Francis preaching to the birds, its significance becomes apparent when we realize that it is a veiled rebuke to the people of that town for not paying attention to his preaching. Many stories of saints and animals told in barbarous times were parables setting forth the importance of Christian compassion for all Creation – men and animals. An outstanding example is the legend that a blind dragon crawled to the foot of the pillar on which St Simeon Stylites was perched, beseeching him to cure it. He did so. As the dragon symbolized evil, the fable's teaching is that Christians should have love and pity for evil-doers.

Symbolic animals have a prominent place in Christian literature and art. In times when few could read, such symbols could convey a message at a glance. Sometimes the animal emblem of a saint represents his outstanding virtue or his victory over temptation. St Anthony is shown with a pig to indicate his austere life and opposition to all greed and sensuality. Often the representation in visual art is a reminder of some story told of the saint. A lion lies beside St Jerome because, as in the story of Androcles, he is said to have befriended one of these beasts which came to him in pain. He extracted a thorn from its paw. St Gertrude, the patron saint of mouse and rat catchers, who is said to have banished hordes of mice, appears in art with mice running up and down her distaff.

In general, Christian legends record and inculcate a fellow-feeling for animals. Compassion for them is set forth as a natural extension of Gospel teaching concerning the importance of love. Only now is it being tardily recognized that the unwise exploitation of nature menaces the good life but the significance of the Christian tradition of saints and animals is that animals are entitled to compassion. Man degrades himself if he fails to realize their interest, beauty and claims on his sympathy.

(See also CATHERINE OF SIENA; CURÉ OF ARS; FRANCIS DE SALES; ICONOGRAPHY; JOHN OF THE CROSS; RELICS; STIGMATA; TERESA OF AVILA.)

FURTHER READING: D. Attwater, *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints* (Penguin, 1965) with bibliography; P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1982); J. de Voragine, *The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine* (Longmans, Green).

The hysterical accusations of two young girls triggered off a witch-hunt in a New England village which is one of the best documented and most famous of all such outbreaks

SALEM WITCHES

THE SALEM WITCH-HUNT of 1692 is perhaps the most famous of its kind, at least in the English-speaking world. It was the greatest in scale, continuance and numbers of people involved of any witch-hunt to take place in America, and therefore has naturally attracted much attention from Americans. By comparison with central European countries, however, the proportions of the outbreak were not remarkable, and the unique feature of the Salem scare is that it ended as suddenly as it began. There was a public revulsion of feeling during the later trials, none of the later suspects were punished, and a heated controversy broke out on whether there ever had been any witchcraft in the community at all, or whether the whole affair had been a tragic delusion.

Because of this controversy, the whole story is unusually well known; but it has to be realized that more is known about Salem than about most such cases precisely because it was untypical. The panic arose in Salem Village, Massachusetts, a rural community some distance out of Salem proper (and since renamed Danvers). It began among a group of eight girls, aged 11 to 20, who in the winter of 1691-2 used to meet in the back premises of the minister's house, in the company of the minister's slave, Tituba. Everybody has always assumed, reasonably, that Tituba, who came from Barbados, stuffed their impressionable heads with tales of African magic. Unfortunately there is no trace of any specifically African, or West Indian, superstition in the stories the girls told later.

These sessions ended by driving Abigail Williams and Ann Putnam, aged 11 and 12, into what was evidently a hysterical illness. Abigail, the youngest of the eight girls, was related to the minister, Samuel Parris, and lived in the house, so she was more exposed to Tituba's influence than the others. The two girls moaned and shrieked for no apparent reason, grovelled and writhed on the ground and occasionally acted as if they believed that they had been transformed into animals.

The Accusations Begin

These symptoms began to spread through the child population of the settlement. The adult community seem to have agreed at once that the girls were bewitched, but Mr Parris (who was doubly involved, in his private and his religious capacity) was unable to discover who was bewitching them. Eventually, however, at the end of February 1692, Abigail and Ann were able to name three of their tormentors: Tituba, Sarah Good and Sarah Osburne. The two last, like those accused early in the witch-hunt, seem to have been unpopular in the settlement and [illegible] distrusted by the Puritan leaders. Later, the children seemed careless whether their accusations were plausible.

At this stage, everybody in authority was disposed to take them seriously. The magistrates had the women arrested on 1 March, and examined them in the presence of their accusers at a special public session, for which they borrowed the church. The two Sarahs denied everything, but Tituba produced an imaginative confession in which she named several more people as instruments of Satan. The afflicted girls duly went into paroxysms in the presence of the people named as witches.

Parody of Holy Communion

Tituba's confession probably saved her life. She was never brought to trial, though she was confiscated from Mr Parris and eventually sold to defray court costs. Sarah Osburne died awaiting trial. Meanwhile the list of suspects grew. Abigail and Ann were still the most active accusers, but other girls were joining in, and some of the accused followed Tituba's example. None of those who confessed, and implicated others, was executed. Those who protested that they were innocent included some whose innocence, in the ordinary way, would have been taken for granted. They included a minister of religion, George Burroughs, Martha Corey, who was a church member in good standing (not a particularly common distinction in early Massachusetts), and Rebecca Nurse, of unsullied reputation. Naturally there were a few old villagers who had always been suspected of witchcraft; Bridget Bishop and Susanna Martin had old suspicions brought against them when they were tried.

A special commission of judges was appointed by the governor, Sir William Phips, to sit in the town of Salem (not the village) in June. Bridget Bishop was condemned and executed at once (she was one of those later rehabilitated), and then the court got down to its work of detecting the tormentors of Abigail Williams and Ann Putnam. The girls were apparently thrown into fits by the near neighbourhood of any witch, but could be temporarily relieved by a touch of her hand. Early on, Rebecca Nurse, against whom there was no evidence at all, was found not guilty; but the court went to the unheard-of length of over-ruling the jury. She was hanged, together with Sarah Good, Susanna Martin and three others, on 19 July.

Others besides the jury had misgivings, but those who expressed them were likely to draw accusations down on their own heads. This was probably the real offence committed by Martha Corey, Rebecca Nurse's sister May Easty, and the deputy-constable John Willard, who refused, shortly after the beginning of the trials, to make any more arrests. All three were executed. Salem Village, that summer, was in the full grip of panic, and the fever was spreading. Abigail and Ann had taken to accusing people at a distance whom they knew only by name. One of these, a Mrs Cary of Charlestown, did not wait to be arrested but came to Salem with her husband and sat among the public in court. The children were quite unaffected by her presence until they casually learned who she was, when the usual fits followed. (She was arrested, but survived the panic and was released.) The authorities of the town of Andover invited some of the children to visit the place and see if any of the local inhabitants were witches. They found several.

The court naturally wanted to find out what witches did, besides throwing children into fits. In this it was not very successful, presumably because the star witnesses were interested in little else. Part of the case against George Burroughs, however, was that he had performed an infernal parody of a Puritan Communion service – a faint, distant echo of the European tales of the sabbath and Black Mass. He was executed on 19 August along with John Willard and the first of the Andover witches. The General Court of Massachusetts passed a special Act of Attainder to deprive him of his clergy status – a procedure nearly, if not quite, unique on American soil.

Pressed to Death

Another incident, believed to be unique in American history, occurred in September when Giles Corey, Martha's husband, who was then over 80, was pressed to death for refusing to plead to the indictment. Under common law at that date, a prisoner could not be tried until he consented to plead. If necessary, he was induced to do this by being tied on his back on the floor of the cell while weights were piled on his chest. If he died under this treatment he died uncondemned, his goods were not forfeit to the state and his will could be executed. Martha, with Mary Easty and six others, was hanged a few days later on 22 September. By this time the death roll was 20, and some 200 people had been arrested. The girls were still producing new names, but they had run out of people they knew and were reduced to accusing people they had merely heard of – including colonial notabilities such as the governor's wife and the president of Harvard.

Governor Phips had been away from the colony for much of the summer, and came upon this situation when he returned. In October he cancelled the special commission and the hearings came to an end, the remaining prisoners being remanded until December, when the majority were acquitted and the governor pardoned the rest. The revulsion of public feeling was apparently complete. The General Court repealed the Act of Attainder on Burroughs. In Salem Village, the magistrates who had begun the inquiry made an admission of error amid general tears and lamentations. Colonial America never again dared to carry out the death sentence for witchcraft.

There had been some bold doubters all along; now there were many. Traditionally, Thomas Brattle, a merchant of Boston, has been remembered as the leading champion of reason. It should be realized that nobody, or hardly anybody, as yet disputed the reality of witchcraft. Brattle's main contention was that people under diabolic influence were unreliable witnesses. There had been argument before the court on the extent of Satan's powers and how they could be tested. There was argument back and forth on whether Satan could assume the form of a human being who was not in his service. At first it was held that he could not, and one John Proctor was convicted and hanged largely on the evidence that he had appeared to plague a child in her dreams. Later it was realized that such appearances proved too little, and this kind of evidence was ruled out before the end of the trials.

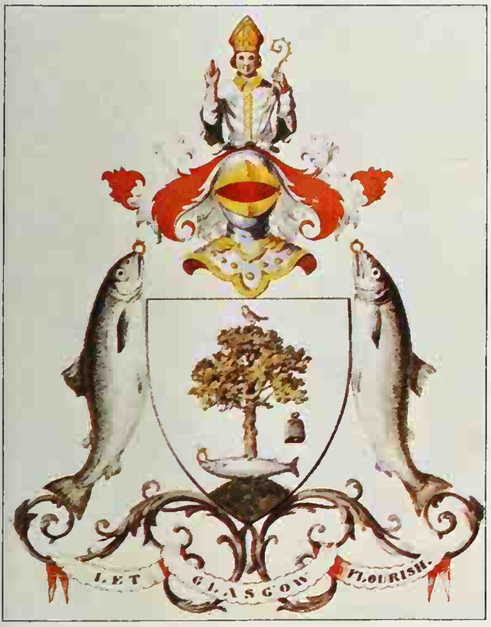
As soon as people were brave enough to say so, it also became clear that Abigail Williams and Ann Putnam could have been inventing their accusations and simulating their afflictions, and if this were so it would explain some of their blunders, such as their failure to identify Mrs Cary after accusing her by name. Scepticism was growing, even if by modern standards it was very limited.

This alarmed the illustrious Cotton Mather, who published *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693) as a counterblast. He had written in denunciation of witchcraft before the Salem scare started, and had probably helped to form the opinions of the local preachers and magistrates. He took an active interest in the persecution, and after it was over he was concerned to defend it. He was prepared, eventually, to admit that there had been miscarriages of justice in individual cases; for instance, he agreed that the evidence of apparitions, which had hanged John Proctor, had been given too much weight. He insisted, however, that Satan had really been specially active in Salem Village that summer, that on the whole the afflicted were genuinely afflicted and the accused justly accused; and that the effect of the persecution was beneficial in purging the community of evil elements and winning for it the favour of God. Mather had started a literary debate on what really happened in Salem Village and why it happened that has never completely ended. (See also HYSTERICAL POSSESSION.)

ELLIOT ROSE

FURTHER READING: P. Boyer and S. Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: the Social Origins of Witchcraft* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1974); Chadwick Hansen, *Witchcraft at Salem* (New American Library); G.L. Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England* (Atheneum, 1972); Marion Starkey, *The Devil in Massachusetts* (Doubleday, 1952).

SALMON


LET GLASGOW FLOURISH.

St Kentigern, the patron saint of Glasgow, is said to have recovered a lady's lost ring from the belly of a salmon, and the arms of the city include the salmon with the ring in its mouth

IN BOTH its natural and supernatural aspects the salmon has always been a fish of mystery. Until comparatively recently all that was known about its habits was that it hatches out in rivers and makes its way to the sea; that it later returns to the river as a grilse and spawns there, after which it is known as a kelt. Salmon are found in the rivers and seas on either side of the Atlantic and in parts of North America they inhabit certain land-locked lakes.

Salmon lore is essentially a part of the folklore of fish in general (see FISH) and, in common with all other fish, the salmon is symbolically speaking a 'psychic being'. Extremely prolific, it was a symbol of abundance; and it represented philosophical retirement because of its mysterious journeyings to the sea. It also symbolized prowess in battle, a result of its ability to overcome adversity in leaping up seemingly impassable rapids. But the salmon is primarily the 'fish of wisdom', and it crops up in this guise time and time again, in ancient and modern traditions. All communities dependent upon salmon for their livelihood have created special ceremonies associated with the fish harvest, varying from individual acts, such as spitting on the fish-hook, to collective rites in which the sea is formally blessed.

A number of extremely interesting customs, usually ecclesiastical in character, are connected with the first fish of the season as with the first fruits on land. At Christchurch in Hampshire the Church retains the right to the first salmon, but the more interesting customs of this type are found farther north, where salmon fishing continues to be a major industry. In Norham, on the river Tweed in Northumberland, the nets were blessed by the vicar, after which the first of the catch was handed over to him as rent. Tea parties, known as salmon kettles, are held at Tweedsmouth, the border town opposite Berwick-on-Tweed, a custom replacing the trade fair that was formerly held to celebrate the season's first fish. A Salmon Queen is now elected, instead of the ancient Master of Revels.

A salmon is incorporated in the arms of the city of Glasgow and in certain ecclesiastical seals. The fish's religious associations are also reflected in a legend of St Kentigern, patron saint of Glasgow, who recovered a lady's lost ring from the belly of a salmon. The fish and ring theme is widespread.

References to mystical salmon are found in Welsh mythology, where it assumes its traditional role of fish of wisdom. According to one anecdote, a salmon is said to have become notorious for winking at married women who gathered on the banks of the sacred stream Alum. The salmon of the Dwyfach and Dwyfer in Merionethshire voluntarily surrendered to the fishermen every Christmas morning, freely permitting themselves to be removed from the water.

The salmon was known as the food of kings among the ancient Irish and it was forbidden to those not of royal birth. The fish is prominent in Celtic lore as Eo Feasa, the fish of knowledge, and it was said to confer prescience when even a thumb was laid upon it. As such it became the emblem of the Irish folk hero Finn (see FINN), who, after being presented with a specimen, ate its flesh and acquired not only foreknowledge but 'magic counsel'; and, in allusion to the courage of the salmon, his physical powers were said to have been supernaturally strengthened.

The European fishing communities of the North American continent brought some of their native customs to the land of their adoption, but the more ancient forms of salmon legend are to be found in the traditions of the North American Indians. The Kwakiutl tribes of British Columbia believe that twins are transformed salmon and will never permit them to venture near the river in case they should become fish again. Like twins all over the world, they are credited with supernatural qualities, in this case the ability to summon salmon into the nets of the waiting fishermen by the power of their voices. This has much in common with the Indian custom of 'preaching to the fish', which was a form of magical incantation.

Welcoming the Salmon

The salmon harvest was of enormous importance to Indian tribal economy and was associated with elaborate ceremonies. The Karoks of California had their own special salmon dance to ensure a good catch, and in the north the Alaskan Indians engaged in magical practices in connection with the first fish of the season. In British Columbia, in the middle of the 19th century, crowds of Indians would assemble for a great festival in anticipation of the arrival of the first fish in the Columbia River in early June. At the sentries' cry of 'salmon' the community would abandon its merrymaking and hasten to the river banks to capture the fish, which were cured as fast as they were landed.

The Indians of this territory invented an intriguing 'fairy tale' to account for the presence of the huge rapids that the fish have to climb in order to attain the river's upper reaches. It relates how in the remote past an evil spirit, seeking to injure their people, caused an earthquake which obstructed the salmon by blocking the course of the river. The Indians, not to be outwitted, constructed a salmon ladder which the fish climbed in their ascent, resting on the ledges to recover from their exhaustion. These ledges were set with salmon traps by the Indians who were able to triumph over the wily evil spirit in this way.

SALT

REGARDED AS an essential part of the diet, salt was bought and sold even in Neolithic times, and labourers and soldiers in ancient Rome were paid partly in salt. The modern word 'salary' is in fact derived from the Latin *salarium*, 'salt allowance'. Necessary for the preservation of food, salt is the symbolic enemy of decay, and because it represented life and incorruptibility it became, like blood brotherhood, a primary ingredient of social relationships, so that to eat another man's salt created a sacred bond. Yet, because it is sterile, salt could also be a symbol of barrenness. After the destruction of Carthage the victorious Romans sowed salt upon the site to symbolize its sterility. The biblical 'cities of the plain' lie buried under or near the salt Dead Sea, and Lot's wife was transformed into a pillar of salt.

As with all other social essentials, salt was supposed to be of supernatural origin. In a Finnish myth the sky god Ukko casts a spark of fire from the heavens into the sea which turns to salt. As a factor in communion with the divine, salt occurs fairly frequently in religion. The eternal bond between God and Israel was the covenant of salt (2 Chronicles 13.5), and the Aztecs worshipped a goddess of salt.

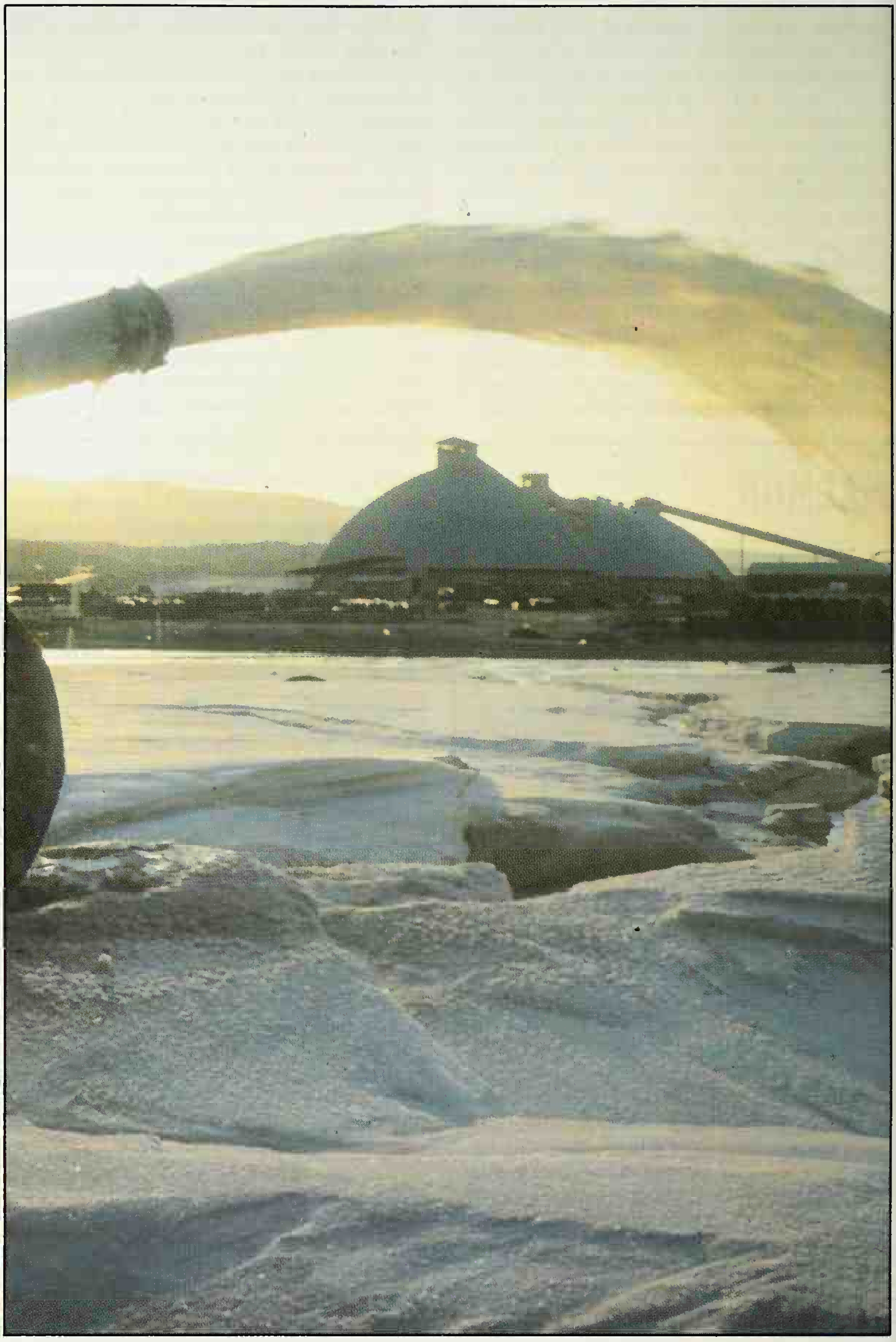
The universal sanctity which salt has acquired makes it a powerful defensive weapon against the powers of evil. Salt's virginal quality was fully recognized by black magicians, and necromancers took particular care never to take salt with their bread before raising the dead, as this would have nullified their spells.

Salt has played an important role in customs associated with birth, marriage and death. A pinch of salt is still sometimes left in a baby's cradle to protect it against evil until it has received the protection of baptism. On its first visit to a new house salt was placed in the child's mouth, and parents sometimes immersed the child's first tooth in salt before casting it into the fire.

In Life and Death

The sexual symbolism of salt was of great importance, and the word was at one time a common use euphemism for amorousness and licentiousness. Iago refers to passion as being 'hot as monkeys, salt as wolves in pride' in *Othello*. At Irish weddings a plate of oatmeal and salt would often be presented to the bride and bridegroom.

Salt plays its part in the rites of death, protecting the newly departed from the evil spirits that are said to be particularly active when the soul hovers between earth, heaven and hell. The ancient Irish placed a plate of salt upon the corpse, and in the US a variation of this same superstition required salt to be left in the room in which someone had died 'to purge the sins of the deceased'. Salt was frequently left in the coffin to symbolize the soul's survival.



J. Ruthven

Because salt is sterile, it was a symbol of barrenness; Sodom and Gomorrah, the biblical 'cities of the plain', are said to be buried under or near the salty Dead Sea: factory near the modern village of Sodom

It is used in the New Year custom of first footing when a dark man representing luck brings gifts, often of salt, to the householder signifying prosperity during the coming year (see FIRST). In the US, householders brought bread and salt with them when they entered their new home for the first time, to ensure a happy tenancy. The spilling of salt, particularly at the meal table, was held to be an unlucky omen, since this threatens the spirit of health and renders one vulnerable to the forces of evil. In Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting *The Last Supper,* Judas is shown upsetting the salt. To neutralize the ill effects it is necessary to take a pinch of the spilled salt with the right hand and cast it over the left shoulder, straight into the Devil's face.

Total abstention from salt was obligatory for certain South American Indians during the planting of the maize crop, and also for hunters before they embarked on the chase. Among fishermen the word salt was often tabooed, since it was the symbol of the sea. Fishermen sprinkled their nets with salt, perhaps as an offering to the sea gods but certainly to ensure the safety of both boat and crew, and ships' carpenters often placed salt between the planks.

At one time the demarcation line between those within the family circle and their special guests, and menials and casual visitors, was the salt cellar. People of distinction sat above it, while those of inferior rank were placed 'below the salt'.

SATANISM

'SATANISM advocates practising a modified form of the Golden Rule. Our interpretation of this rule is: "Do unto others as they do unto you".' This comment from *The Satanic Bible* by Anton Szandor La Vey, founder of the Church of Satan in San Francisco, neatly illustrates the principle on which Satanism is based. Things which are backwards, upside down, the wrong way round, are symbolically connected with the Devil as the power which seeks to overturn the order and worship of God, and the essence of Satanism is the reversal of Christian and conventional values. It is now the Christian God who is evil and the Enemy who is good. The Prince of Darkness is the true Lord of Light, Lucifer, 'light-bearer'.

Christian moral values are also stood on their heads. For the Christian virtues of compassion, loving-kindness, patience, self-restraint, the Satanist has nothing but contempt, as dreary, downtrodden, spiritless ideals. To Christian otherworldliness he opposes this-worldliness, the ruthless struggle for power and pleasure on earth, and in and through the flesh. The weak, the chaste and the merciful he disdains, and he devotes himself to dominance, cruelty, dirt, lust, and all fierce and passionate emotions.

Perhaps the two Christian virtues which most infuriate the Satanist are humility and purity. To humility he opposes pride for which, after all, his Master was expelled from heaven in the first place. To the Christian tendency to regard the body and its passions as sinful and unclean, he opposes an uninhibited delight in all pleasures of the senses – and the more perverse and disgusting to the conventional mind, the better. Not that Satanists are always consistent, any more than other people are. They can be found, for instance, insisting that all forms of sexual indulgence are good provided other people are not hurt, while in another context they are preaching the delights of brutality.

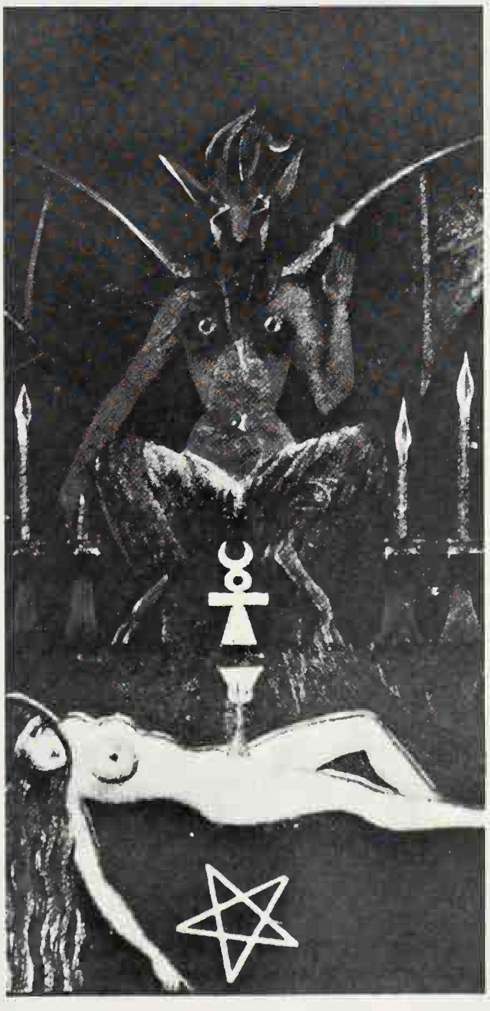
The Galilean Serpent

Satanists are few and far between, since not many people want to turn all of society's accustomed standards upside down. Modern Satanism has received much of its impetus from 19th century literature, from the 'decadent' enthusiasm for scarlet vices and unnameable sins, from the rebellion against Victorian bourgeois values, especially in relation to sex, from the fierce hatred of Christianity. Swinburne, for example, in a letter to William Rossetti, expressed his disgust at the Christian faith of the latter's poetess sister, Christina: 'Good Satan! what a fearful warning against the criminal lunacy of theolatry! It is horrible to think of such a woman – and of so many otherwise noble and beautiful natures – spiritually infected and envenomed by the infernal and putrefying virus of the Galilean serpent.' Aleister Crowley (see CROWLEY) grew up against this background and eagerly welcomed its hatred of Christianity, to which his own fundamentalist upbringing had in any case inclined him. Crowley appears as Althotas in an unfinished book by J. F. C. Fuller, the strategist and military historian who was a disciple of Crowley in his youth, where he says that he agrees with Shelley and Nietzche in defining Christianity as the religious expression of the slave-spirit in man: 'it is Christianity considered as slavishness, as fear of all sorts, as altruism – that exquisite refinement of fear which we call sympathy – that I evidence.'

Crowley carried his loathing of Christianity to the lengths of baptizing a toad as Jesus Christ and solemnly crucifying it, reviling it in its agonies. But though he identified himself with Satan and Antichrist, after his death a group of Satanists in Latin America conducted a ceremony of execration against his memory. They made an effigy of him in mud and wax, which they befouled and burned, bitterly reproaching the 'wickedest man in the world' with not having been wicked enough.

The root ideas of Satanism go far back beyond the 19th century to the Gnostic sects (see GNOSTICISM). They were not Satanists either, for far more people have been accused of worshipping the Devil than have ever actually done so, but they saw the world about them as profoundly evil, as the real hell, and life on earth as a sentence served in a prison. If the world is evil, then the power which made it and rules it must be evil too, and some of the Gnostics identified this evil power as the God of the Jews, who is described as creating the world in the book of Genesis and whose behaviour in the Old Testament they found impossible to reconcile with Christian principles. The good God, they said, lives far away in some distant heaven and we on earth are in bondage to the evil Yahweh.

The Black Mass is a sacrament of matter and the flesh, instead of spirit, and an adoration of the power opposed to Christianity: celebrating it on the body of a naked woman is a comparatively modern refinement



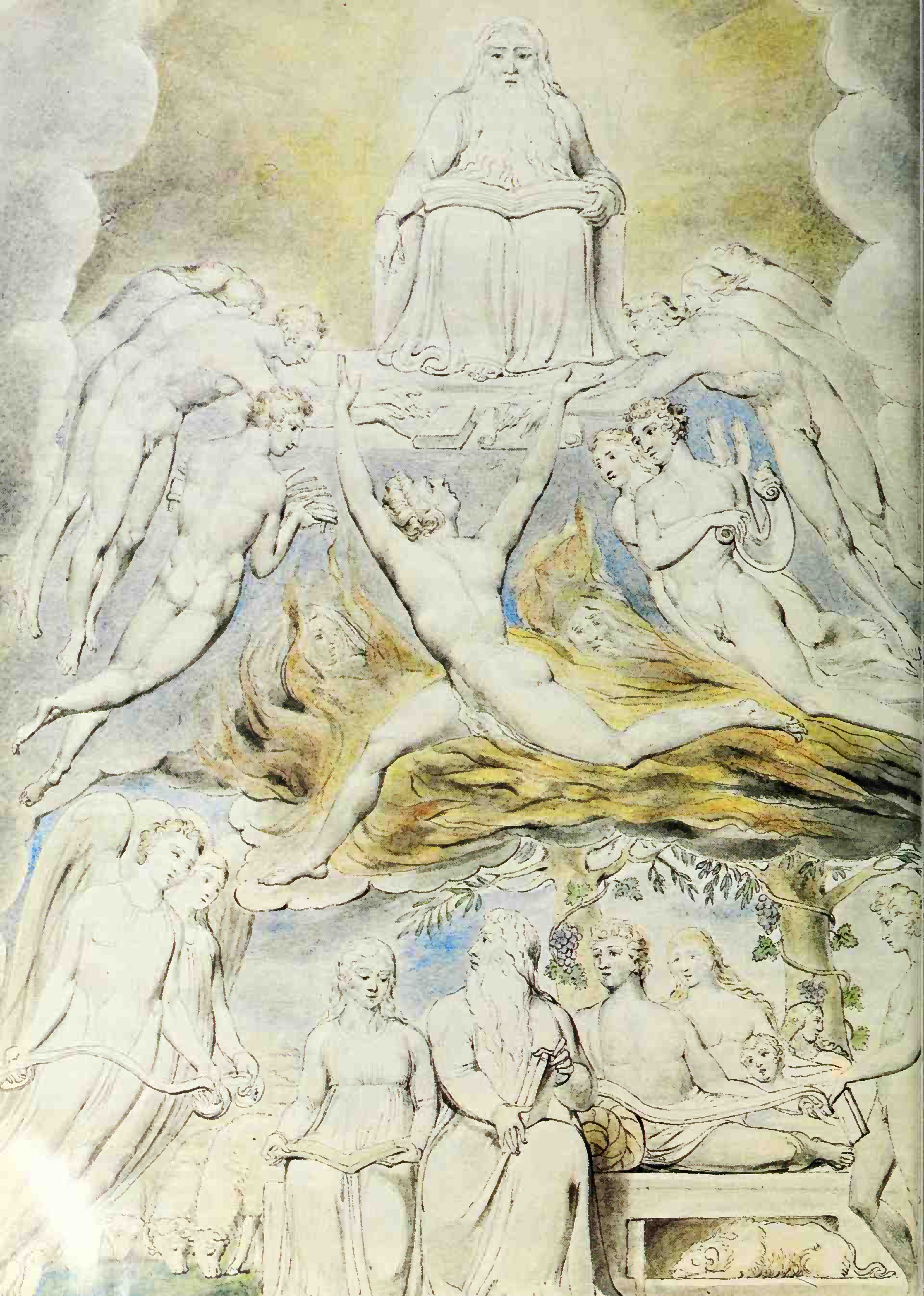
The God of this World

They could draw some support for this opinion from the New Testament. In the story of the temptation in the wilderness, the Devil offers Jesus 'all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them' (Matthew, chapter 4), with the clear implication that the gift is his to make. In St John's gospel (12.31) the Devil is called 'the ruler of this world', and St Paul calls him 'the god of this world' (2 Corinthians 4.4). And the belief that this evil god of the world was Yahweh could have been supported from another passage in St John (8.44), where Jesus tells the Jews that their Father is not God but the Devil.

Gnostics generally regarded Jesus as a Saviour sent by the good God to rescue men from enslavement to evil, but the identification of Yahweh as the evil power naturally turned the Old Testament upside down. Patriachs and prophets and servants of Yahweh turned into villains, and Cain, Esau, the Sodomites and other opponents of Yahweh became heroes. The serpent of Eden was now a messenger from the good God, sent to bring Adam and Eve the knowledge of good and evil so that their eyes would be opened to the evil nature of Yahweh's creation. Some Gnostics, or so their Christian antagonists said, attacked Jesus as the evil Son of the evil Father and glorified Judas Iscariot for betraying him.

If God the Father was an evil deity, then it could be deduced that the Ten Commandments, and the other moral rules laid down by him were also evil, intended to keep men in subjection to him. Some Gnostics led austere lives of self-denial to disentangle themselves from the wicked world, but others were accused of attempting to escape from bondage to evil by breaking all conventional moral rules. Some said that once a man had received the gnosis, had understood the true nature of things, he could indulge in all his lusts and desires without fear of corruption. Writing in the late 2nd century, St Irenaeus accused one group of Gnostics of maintaining that the soul could only free itself from the Devil's world by exhausting every possibility of human experience, by doing 'all those things which we dare not either speak or hear of, nay which we must not even conceive in our thoughts'.

Gnostic ideas were kept alive in the East by obscure sects and were eventually transmitted into western Europe by way of the Bogomils and Cathars (see BOGOMILS; CATHARS). The Cathars identified the God of the Old Testament as the Devil, the lord of this world which he had created, the master of the human body and of all material and temporal things. They attacked the Roman Catholic Church because it



To Satanists it is the Christian god who is evil and Satan, the Enemy, who is good; they believe that their Master will eventually triumph, and look to him for power and pleasure in this world, and a happy future in the next: *Satan Before the Throne of God* by William Blake, one of 22 illustrations to the book of Job

worshipped a being they regarded as Satan, and because they considered it stained with the worldliness and materialism inevitable in the service of the Evil One. But the Church reversed the accusation and branded the Cathars as Satanists.

Perhaps some of the Cathars did reach the conclusion that if the God of Catholics was really the Devil, then perhaps the Devil of the Catholics was the true God. Certainly, the Church maintained that they did. In the following centuries the same accusation was made against other heretical groups, including the Waldensians, the Luciferans in the 13th century, and the Knights Templar in the 14th (see KNIGHTS TEMPLAR; LUCIFER; WALDENSIANS). A pattern of 'Satanist' belief and behaviour was built up, whether or not any real Satanism was involved, its essential ingredients being worship of the Devil and the reversal of Christian values. A Satanist was one who renounced Christ and his Church, and blasphemously maltreated its sacred objects, symbols and ceremonies; who adored the Devil in the form of a man or a goat or some other animal; who sang and danced in the Devil's honour and obscenely kissed his person; and who revelled in child-slaughter and cannibalism, indiscriminate sexual orgies, perversion, homosexuality and every species of crime and abomination. This same pattern of accusations was brought against the witches.

The heart and centre of the persecution of witches was that they were Satanists, that they had rejected the rightful God and given their allegiance to his arch-opponent, and that in their 'sabbaths' or meetings they worshipped the ruler of evil, carnality and filth. Some of those accused as witches do seem to have taken the Devil for their god, worshipping him as an equal opponent of the Christian God, over whom he would eventually triumph. They looked to Satan for power and pleasure in this world and for a happy future in the next, and they vilified Christ as a traitor and a cheat, who had made promises which he did not keep, and who had gone away to live in heaven while Satan remained with his faithful on earth. The fierce hatred and contempt felt for Christianity comes out in many of the confessions extorted from witches and in accounts of the Black Mass, which they were accused of performing at the sabbath, in adoration of the Devil, as a blasphemous degradation of Christian ritual and as a celebration of the flesh and matter, as against the spirit. (See also BLACK MASS; FRENCH WITCHCRAFT; SABBATH.)

In modern times Satanism appears more often in print than in real life. There is a vivid account of the Black Mass in J. K. Huysmans's novel *Là-Bas*, probably drawn from life. In his *History of Witchcraft and Demonology* Montague Summers quoted from an Italian newspaper a description of a Satanic chapel discovered in the Palazzo Borghese in 1895. 'The walls were hung all round from ceiling to floor with heavy curtains of silk damask, scarlet and black, excluding the light: at the further end there stretched a large tapestry upon which was woven in more than life-size a figure of Lucifer, colossal, triumphant, dominating the whole. Exactly beneath an altar had been built, amply furnished for the liturgy of hell: candles, vessels, rituals, missal, nothing was lacking. Cushioned prie-dieus (kneeling desks) and luxurious chairs, crimson and gold, were set in order for the assistants; the chamber being lit by electricity . . . arrayed so as to glare from an enormous eye.'

A few Satanist groups still exist, here and there, and the survival of Gnostic ideas is illustrated by a set of questions and answers issued by one of them, styling itself Our Lady of Endor Coven, The Ophite Cultus Sathanas. 'Satanism,' it says, 'is the position opposed to the worship of the force that brought the cosmos into existence as mind and matter out of the realm of pure spirit', in other words, opposed to the worship of the Gnostic evil world-maker, the Christian God the Father. Cain 'celebrated the First Satanic Mass' and Satanism 'has no conception of sin, but rather puts ignorance (the lack of the Gnosis) in the place of sin'. Members of less unorthodox faiths may be relieved to hear that Satanists hold aloof from the world ecumenical movement.

RICHARD CAVENDISH

Closely connected with the Greek Cronus, the Titan who was deposed by his sons, Saturn is generally regarded as being a cruel and gloomy god, although his festival, the Saturnalia, was a time of revelry; his sinister aspects are perpetuated in the astrological significance of the planet Saturn

SATURN

IN LITERARY presentations of classical mythology from Roman times onward, the figure named Saturn has been filled with the content of the Greek Cronus, one of the Titans who were sons of Mother Earth and who ruled before the Olympians and were overthrown by them (see CRONUS). Scholars have therefore tried to discover what kind of deity the Roman Saturnus was in origin, and why and when he was selected to be a Roman Cronus. It is a matter of some importance that in classical times the Greek Cronus seems to have been confined to myth, and hardly to have received any cult. This would be natural for a figure driven from power by his son and therefore no longer important for human destinies.

The name of Saturnus was connected by such ancient writers as Festus and Varro with the sowing of crops (*Satus*) but this derivation is doubtful. It may be Etruscan, as F. Altheim has argued: he regards it as connected with the place-name Satrium and the Etruscan clan called *Satre*. This would mean that Saturnus was the god of this clan, but that fact alone would not show what kind of god he was. Festus mentions that Saturnus's name occurs in the very ancient song of the Salii, an archaic priesthood of Rome (see MARS). His festival the Saturnalia is recorded in the earliest form of the Roman calendar of festivals. He is connected with another deity – the goddess Lua, to whom captured weapons were dedicated.

On an Etruscan bronze from Piacenza, which is in the form of a liver used in divination, the name occurs on the left or ill-omened side. But even this Etruscan origin does not exclude a close and very early connection with the Greek Cronus. Greek influence in south Italian and Etruscan religion goes back nearly to the days of the earliest Greek settlements of the 8th century BC. Why an Etruscan clan should adopt Cronus from the Greeks and rename him after itself is a question hard to answer, given his faded and mostly sinister character in Greek myth. But Greek religion of earlier stages than the Olympian mythology of Homer continued to survive in many parts of the Greek world. Its divine figures are little known, but Cronus may have been important among them.

The temple of Saturn was on the slope of the Capitoline Hill in Rome. There is little evidence from inscriptions outside the city for his cult in Italy. The festival of the Saturnalia was famous for the temporary suspension of the authority of the higher classes over the lower and of masters over slaves. Saturn, who as an exile saw the world upside-down, was the natural patron of slaves on such an occasion.

Saturn was also, rather oddly, connected with weights and measures, and the minting of coins: he was even guardian of the treasury. The Saturnian metre of older Roman poetry was a rhythm originally Greek but apparently adapted to a language of stress rather than quantity, as Latin was in earlier times. The adjective *Saturnius* had sometimes a special quality. *Saturnia Juno* means simply Juno as daughter of Saturn, as Hera was daughter of Cronus in Greek myth. *Saturnia tellus* in Virgil means Italy as a rich land reserved for the finest breed of men. But in *Saturnia regna*, 'Saturn's reign', there is much more of the Greek content of 'life under Cronus' when human life had been easier and gentler, before Zeus made it hard (see TIME).

God of Chill and Gloom

This is the usual character of Saturn in classical Latin literature. But his sinister aspect never disappeared, and in later astrological belief it became predominant. This is the origin of the word 'saturnine'.

The cruelty and crimes of the reigning Cronus, his exile at the hands of Zeus, and the gloom and despair in which he spent the rest of his days were well-known features of Greek myth, which reappeared in stories told of Saturn under classical Greek influence. To Greek myth, by the date when

Although the phrase 'Saturn's reign' was used to describe a time when life was easy and gentle, Saturn's connection with the Greek Cronus also makes him a god of melancholy character, full of gloom and despair: statue of Saturn, 3rd century AD

Bardo Museum, Tunis/Sonia Halliday

classical Latin literature arose, there had been added another element, the Babylonian lore connecting various gods with various planets. The influence of these planets on human destiny was the influence of these gods transmitted by a particular channel, and portioned out according to their predictable movements in the heavens. The planet that the Romans came to call Saturnus had in Babylonian or Assyrian belief been linked to the god Ninurta, whose province was war and hunting as practised by the Assyrian kings. The cruelty of this background became attached to the planet. This character was attributed to the [illegible] Saturn all through medieval times. [illegible] with his earlier savagery and later banishment, as taken over from Cronus, became a god of chill, gloom and cruelty. This character was liable to appear in children born when his planet was in the ascendant. A further addition to this lore was made from the theory of temperament developed in Greek medicine. In a combination of astrology with the medical theory of humours in one of its cruder forms, Saturn came to represent *melaina chole*, black bile or melancholia; a frame of mind, ferocious like the purely bilious temperament, but also gloomy to the point of madness. Those whose temperament was entirely Saturnine tended to be full of hidden malice, to be grumpy celibates and cruel to children, and to have a permanent feeling of bondage and captivity and a love of concealment. When they were mad or in their mad fits, such people would be like Shakespeare's King Lear after his deposition.

E. D. PHILLIPS

Planet of Limitation

Until recently the most distant of the known planets, Saturn was looked upon for centuries as being cold and slow. Astrologers have described him as the most evil and dangerous of all the heavenly bodies.

'Limitation' and 'control' are the keywords applied to Saturn; his influence brings caution. A person ruled by him is likely to succeed in life through a combination of hard work and forethought. He will make his plans for the future, and then keep rigorously to his timetable, looking cautiously ahead for unexpected events.

A person's power of self-control will depend to a large extent on Saturn's influence over him, but this control can be misused, and he may become emotionally cold. In fact, Saturnians have been described as people who are 'cold in charity'. The sense of limitation imposed by Saturn may cause someone ruled by him to be over-conscious of the narrowness of his existence, and to feel a sense of inadequacy.

On the other hand, the influence of this planet enables a person to endure with patience the difficulties he may encounter, even though he feels them keenly, and it also instils in him the urge to overcome these difficulties and the ability to bear any responsibilities that result from them.

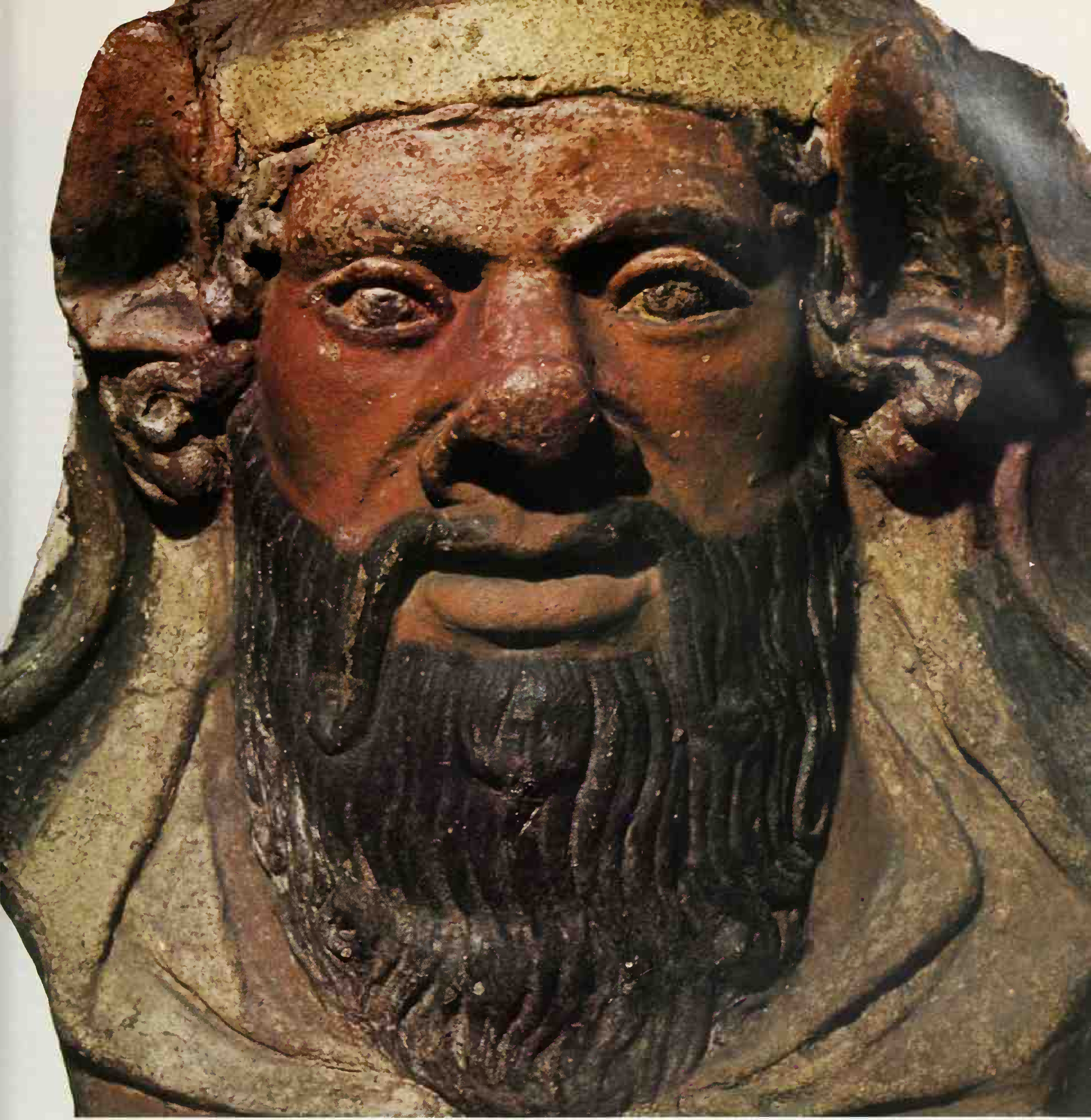
Someone who is ruled by Saturn will be cautious in love, as in everything else, and will think long and hard before deciding to marry. Once married, however, a male Saturnian will be a good provider, while a woman influenced by this planet will prove to be a capable and economical housewife.

Saturn traditionally rules the later years of a person's life, the time when he accepts his responsibilities and settles down; people born under this planet are often late in developing their innate skills and talents.

Black is the favourite colour of people ruled by Saturn, and in appearance, too, they are often dark with serious and grave features. A 'saturnine' temperament is gloomy and melancholy, but it has its positive side: the saturnine humour has been described as the one that most influences intellectuals.

A Saturnian will be happiest doing routine work, or in an organization where he can look ahead and plan for the future, knowing that his advancement is likely to be steady and that there is a pension waiting for him at the end of his working life. For this reason he is best suited to a career in business, government or politics, or in the Church or the army.

FURTHER READING: L. Greene, *Saturn: a New Look at an Old Devil* (Weiser, 1976); D. Talbott, *The Saturn Myth* (Doubleday, 1980).



C. M. Dixon

The satyrs were minor spirits of Nature, partly human and partly animal, who became linked with the god Dionysus: head of a satyr, Etruscan, in the British Museum

The attendants of Dionysus, god of the rising sap, the satyrs were sensual, lecherous and pleasure-loving

SATYRS

PARTLY HUMAN, partly bestial, the satyrs were minor rustic gods or demons, traditional companions of the god Dionysus, lewd and lascivious by nature. Their ultimate origin is puzzling and it may be that their association with Dionysus (see DIONYSUS) began in Attica and Ionia. They were commonly represented with bristly hair, round and upturned noses, and pointed animal-like ears, with small horns growing from the tops of their foreheads and with tails like those of horses. Dressed in animal skins, wearing wreaths of ivy, vine or fir, bibulous, sensual and pleasure-loving, they lie sleeping, play musical instruments or join in wild dances with the nymphs.

Their chief prototype is Silenus himself, that ancient Falstaff, bald, jovial and rotund, carrying a wine bag, usually so tipsy that he rides around on an ass or has to be propped up by other satyrs. A dancer and flute player, he was also regarded as a prophet.

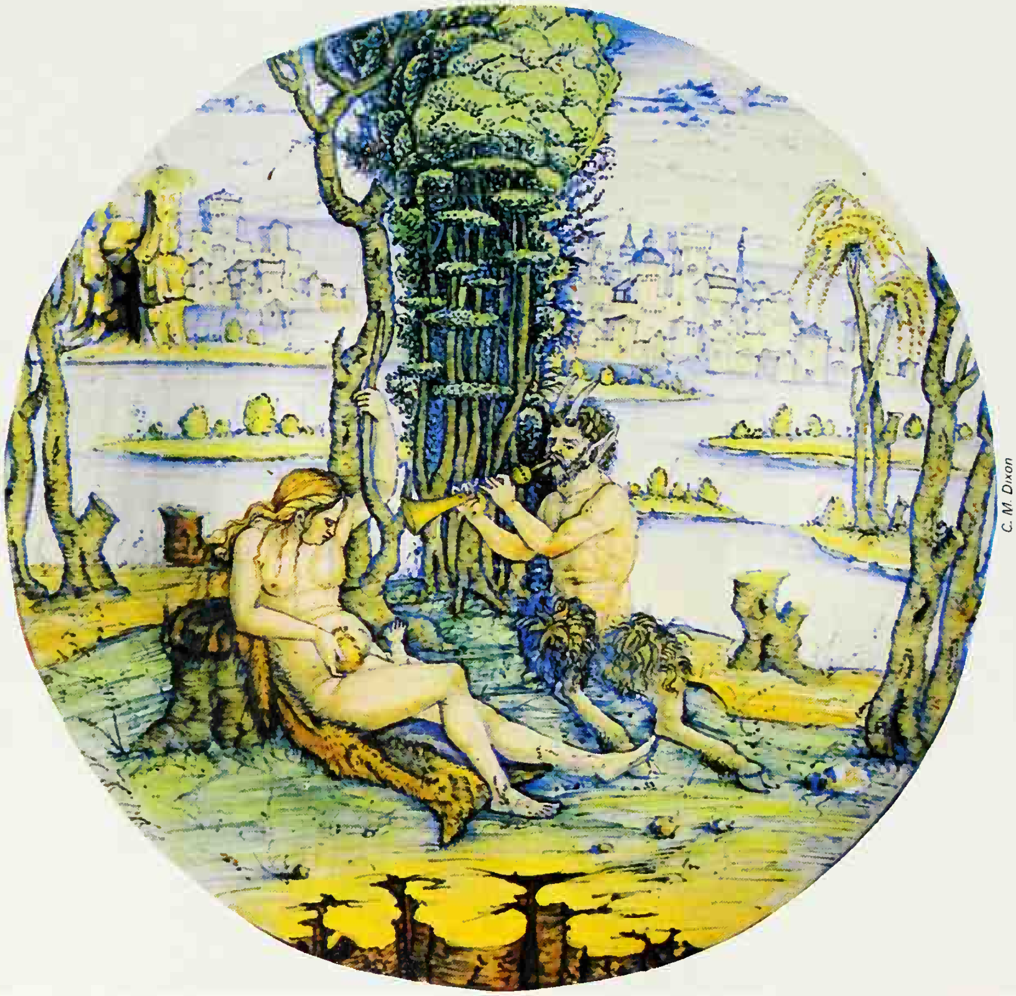
To make any sense of this odd jumble of characteristics we must bear in mind the nature of the god with whom the satyrs were closely associated. As E. R. Dodds has pointed out, in the introduction to his edition of the *Bacchae* of Euripides, to the Greeks of the classical age Dionysus was not solely, or even mainly, the god of wine. His cult titles identify him as the power in the tree, the blossom-bringer, the abundance of life, his domain the liquid fire in the grape, the sap thrusting in a young tree, the blood pounding in the veins of a young animal, all the mysterious and uncontrollable tides that ebb and flow in the life of Nature. It may well be that his association with certain wild plants, such as the fir and ivy, and with certain animals, is in fact older than his association with the vine.

'It was the Alexandrines,' adds Dodds, 'and above all the Romans – with their tidy functionalism and their cheerful obtuseness in matters of the spirit – who departmentalized Dionysos as "jolly Bacchus" the wine-god with his riotous crew of nymphs and satyrs. As such he was taken over from the Romans by Renaissance painters and poets; and it was they in turn who shaped the image in which the modern world pictures him.'

Links with the Birth of Zeus

The Greeks in the time of Euripides were beginning to bring other Nature spirits of other cults into association with the satyrs. Thus the chorus in the *Bacchae* tells the myth of the origin of the kettledrum; how it was invented in a Cretan cave by Curetes or Corybantes (see CORYBANTES) to drown the cries of the baby Zeus, then presented to Rhea, his mother; and how the satyrs obtained it and introduced it into Dionysiac ritual.

The Curetes of Crete were guardians of the infant god and attendants on the mother goddess. Hesiod tells us that they were lovers of sport and dancing; and they are compared by Strabo with similar bands, such as Corybantes, Cabiri, Dactyls and Telchines. It was sometimes considered likely that Curetes and Corybantes were the same, namely unmarried *Kouroi*, 'youths' chosen for the war dance connected with the rituals of the mother of the gods, known also as Corybantes because they walked with a butting of their heads, in dancing style.



C. M. Dixon

A satyr with horns, pointed ears and the haunches of a goat plays his rustic pipe in what little the encroaching city has left of his woodland retreat: 16th century, Italian

To Strabo, Tityroi (a name connected with the satyrs) were like the Corybantes. They belonged to that cycle of Cretan-Phrygian tradition which was bound up with the sacred rites of the rearing of the child Zeus in Crete, which were held in honour of the mother of the gods in Phrygia and in the region of the Trojan Ida. In Crete, such rites were performed with orgiastic worship and with such ministers as served Dionysus – the satyrs. These the Cretans called Curetes, the armed young men who danced the story of the birth of Zeus.

The Satyr-Play

Greek drama developed out of Dionysiac ritual. Competitors in the dramatic festival submitted four plays, consisting of three tragedies and a 'satyr' play. It seems that tragedy and 'satyr' had an independent growth out of the ritual, until it became the custom to add a satyr-play to the tragic trilogy as a conventional part of the whole performance. A satyr-play was similar to a tragedy in structure, but was shorter. It was a kind of burlesque and its chorus was always composed of a group of satyrs, who had a typical dance, called the *sikinnis*. Its themes were taken from the same sources as those of tragedy – epic and mythological.

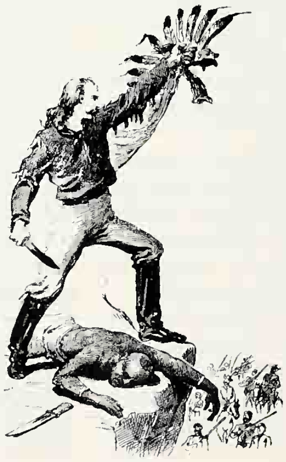
The only two satyr-plays that have survived are the *Ichneutai* of Sophocles and the *Cyclops* of Euripides, which is a medley composed of the Polyphemus episode from the ninth book of the *Odyssey* and the legend of the capture of Dionysus by Lydian pirates. We know too that the satyr-play which accompanied the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus was called *Proteus*. Apparently this play, in lighter vein, counterbalanced the story of Agamemnon's homecoming with the adventure of Menelaus, his brother, on his return from the Trojan war.

R. F. WILLETTS

FURTHER READING: E. R. Dodds ed., *The Bacchae* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2nd edn, 1960); William Arrowsmith ed., 'The Bacchae' in *Complete Greek Tragedies* (Chicago Univ. Press, vol. 4, 1958).

Scalping

Removing part of the skin and hair of an enemy's head as a sign of victory over him and evidence of prowess; related to headhunting (see HEAD); reported of the Scythians by Herodotus, and practised in North America by some Indian peoples and some whites; the scalp [illegible] dried and preserved, and would [illegible] carried in a victory dance; scalping [illegible] not always fatal to the victim.



Mansell Collection

Paganism survived late in Scandinavia and it is possible that the great myth of Ragnarok, in which heaven and earth and the gods themselves are destroyed, may have been influenced by Christian ideas about Doomsday

SCANDINAVIA

THE PAGAN FAITH of Scandinavia developed out of the religion of the Germanic peoples, but the sombre conditions in the northern mountains, the long dark winters and the stormy seas, as well as the influence of Lapps and Finns and other peoples across the Baltic, may have helped to give it a special character of its own. Paganism lasted until about 1000 AD in Denmark, Norway and Iceland, and even later in Sweden, and thus far more material has survived than in Anglo-Saxon England or Germany.

Most of the literary material was written down in Icelandic monasteries after the conversion, but there are short poems whose authors are known to have lived in the pre-Christian period, and a number of mythological poems preserved in the collection known as the *Elder Edda*. Some of the myths are found in a long Latin history of Denmark written by a learned monk, Saxo Grammaticus, in the 12th century; and many more in the *Prose Edda*, a handbook for poets written in Old Icelandic in the 13th century by a brilliant poet, historian and politician called Snorri Sturluson, who loved the old stories and wanted to keep them alive in men's minds. We have also a vast body of saga literature, prose stories composed in Iceland, which contain memories and traditions from earlier times.

Thus there is a rich literary heritage from the Scandinavian pagan past, and to this may be added the material provided by the outstanding work in archeology done in Denmark, Sweden and Norway. There are the funeral ships of Oseberg and Gokstad, pagan burials painstakingly restored and displayed in the Ship Museum at Oslo; the treasures of the Danish Bronze Age in the National Museum at Copenhagen and those in gold and silver from the Migration Period of Sweden in the National Museum at Stockholm, and the extensive collection of memorial stones from the island of Gotland with their vivid mythological pictures, originally painted in bright colours.

There are also sites like Gamle Uppsala in Sweden, where the burial mounds of the pagan kings still stand beside the little church which replaced an ancient sanctuary; or Jelling in Denmark, where the memorial stone of the first Christian king confronts the burial mounds of the old sanctuary; or Thingvellir in Iceland, the place where the Law Assembly met every year with much ancient ceremonial and sacrifice. These are indeed impressive reminders of a religion which once possessed a powerful hold on men's minds. In south Sweden can be seen hundreds of rock carvings from a still earlier time, recording rites and symbols; while at holy places like Thorsbjerg in north Germany or Skedemose on the island of Oland in the Baltic, offerings of men and animals, weapons, ornaments, ploughs and food were made over a period of centuries in the lakes and marshes, as careful excavation has now revealed.

Much therefore is known of the pagan religion of Scandinavia, although there is much that remains obscure. Since it lasted so long in the north, from the first settlements after the Ice Age up to the 11th century AD, many changes and developments took place as new ideas and customs came in from abroad; there must also have been considerable local variation. However, a general pattern is perceptible.

Gods of the North

The three main gods who stand out in the myths, and of whom we learn also from carved stones and figures and scenes in metalwork, are Odin, god of inspiration, magic and the dead; Thor, god of the hammer, who preserved gods and men from giants and monsters; and Freyr with his twin Freyja, the best known of the fertility deities, the Vanir (see ODIN; THOR; FREYR). Odin was the ancestor of Scandinavian kings, and was worshipped by those who lived by their weapons and went out to plunder and conquer in many lands in the Viking Age; war captives and animals might be sacrificed to him and their bodies hung from trees.

Thor was the sky god and the god of the community, who supported law and order; the Assembly opened on his day, Thursday, and men took oaths on his sacred ring. The fertility gods were worshipped by men and women of all ranks, for all wished for health and prosperity for their families, their animals and their crops, and humble offerings of locks of hair and neck rings and pots of butter made to them have been found in the holy places.

Other divinities appear in the literature: Heimdall, watchman of the gods, sometimes called the father of mankind; Tyr who bound the Fenris wolf; Loki, the mischief-maker (see LOKI); Balder, the fair son of Odin, who perished by his brother's hand (see BALDER); Njord, the god of ships; Bragi, god of poetry; Hoenir, the mysterious silent deity, and Mimir, the wisest one, whose head was kept and consulted by Odin. All these occur in the tales and were known to the poets. They have varied and controversial origins; some perhaps, like Tyr, were once powerful gods whose names were replaced by others until they faded into legend; some were variants of the fertility gods Freyr and Freyja, like Njord and Idun who kept the apples of youth; some, like Bragi, may have been created by literary men out of the titles of the great powers. In his *Prose Edda* Snorri strove to bring these varied figures together into some kind of harmony, but even he found many problems in the way.

Besides the gods, there was a host of

Scenes carved on the 10th century Gosforth Cross in Cumberland, including the binding of Loki and the horn of Heimdall which sounds the last alarm, are related to the doom of the Norse gods and associated with the Christian picture of Christ's victory over hell and chaos

C. M. Dixon

lesser supernatural beings who were said to inhabit mountains and rocks, forests, marshes and rivers, and who could both help men and do them harm. They might be called elves, land spirits, giants or trolls, and they were closely linked to special localities; they are probably as old as human habitation in Scandinavia, and after the conversion one of the fates of the old gods was to be relegated to this company.

It was once believed that heathen temples were raised for the worship of the main gods, for these are sometimes mentioned in the sagas, but the tendency now is to believe that most of the rites took place in the open in holy places, while feasts in honour of the gods were held in the hall of the chief man of the district. Sacrificial banquets, when cattle and horses were slaughtered, took place at certain points in the agricultural year, particularly midwinter, autumn and spring. On such occasions the gods seem to have been worshipped as a group, but individuals also had their own special deities, to whom they gave devoted worship.

There was much lore about the gods and their world. At the end of the Viking Age this was clearly pictured as Asgard, where the gods dwelt in their halls under the leadership of Odin. There were two other regions beside Asgard, Jotunheim, the abode of giants, and Hel, the realm of the dead, and these three kingdoms were said to lie under the three roots of the World Tree, Yggdrasill, which stood in the centre of the universe (see ASH). Middle Earth, the home of mankind, was joined to the realm of the gods by the rainbow bridge, Bifrost (see RAINBOW). This picture must not, however, be taken too literally; tremendous distances divided these worlds, as appears from the impressive descriptions of journeys made from one to another through darkness, cold and vast spaces.

The Twilight of the Gods

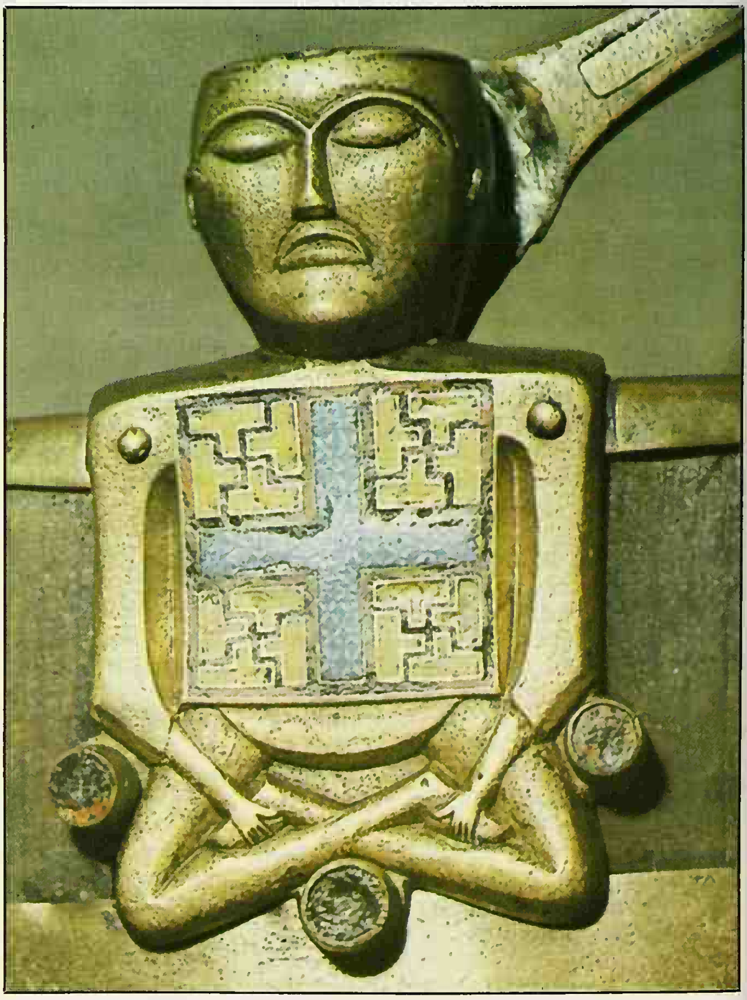
The creation of this universe is told in poems and stories. One tradition is that it was formed from the body of the giant Ymir, created in the beginning when heat and cold came together in the primeval abyss and life was brought into being (see GIANTS). There is mention of a primeval cow who nourished Ymir, and also of the sons of Bor who slew him and created the worlds from his flesh and bones, eyes and hair. The first men and giants are said to have sprung from his body, although there is also a tale of the gods creating man and woman from trees on the shore. As all things had a beginning, so also they were of necessity brought to an end, and the myth of Ragnarok, the end of the world and its recreation, is among the most justly famous of the northern myths.

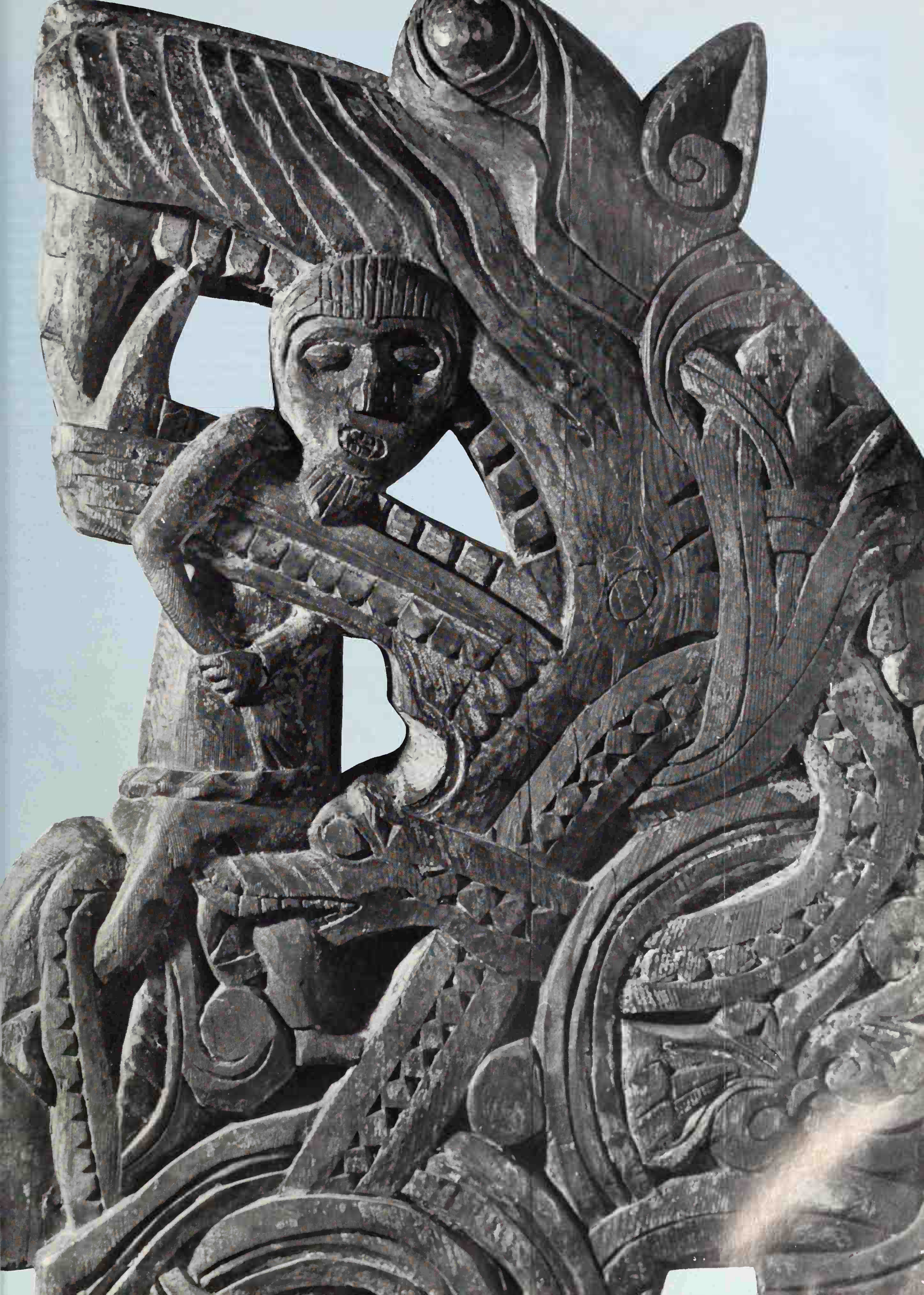
The word Ragnarok in Old Norse means 'Doom of the Gods' or, by a very small alteration in spelling, 'Twilight of the Gods'. The idea of a final destruction of earth and heaven, and the overthrow of Asgard by evil monsters who have been continually striving to bring back chaos to the universe, is found in some of the earliest poetry and many of the myths of the north, but the detailed account of the catastrophe is given mainly in one poem, *Völuspá*. The implication in this account is that Ragnarok is the end of a cycle, when heaven and earth and the very gods themselves are destroyed, to be recreated again for the opening of another age. This is in accordance with the teaching of certain Eastern religions, and it is possible that ideas from the East influenced Scandinavian literature towards the close of the Viking Age and gave new inspiration to the older Germanic tradition of the creation and destruction of the world.

The account of Ragnarok in *Völuspá* is one of great vigour and imaginative power. Just as in the beginning life was created, according to a tradition recorded by Snorri in the *Prose Edda*, from the coming together of cold and heat, so these finally combine to destroy it, and the earth like a burning ship is consumed by fire as it sinks beneath the waves. The vividness of the description must owe something to the unique physical conditions in Iceland, subject to every type of volcanic eruption, where there has been recurring destruction up to the present day of fertile land by white-hot lava, and where

Right **'The wolf Fenris shatters the magic cord which holds him and advances against Asgard, his gaping jaws filling the whole heaven. He devours the sun, and darkness comes upon the world.' The god Odin, summoning his army of heroes, goes out against the wolf and is devoured: Norwegian choir stall, 13th century *Below* Viking bronze weather vane *(left)*, and the cross and swastika combined *(right)***

Werner Foreman





erupting steam, pools of boiling water and bubbling sulphur contrast with the great white glaciers and the winter snows.

The terror begins with the coming of the Great Winter, which lasts three years on end with no summer to break it, and with much wickedness among men, the breaking of oaths, murders among kindred, incest and bitter warfare. Then come great earthquakes, when rocks are shattered and mountains crumble, as the monsters and hostile giants, imagined to dwell deep in the depths of earth, begin to work their will, and the World Tree itself quivers and shakes in the tumult. The wolf Fenris shatters the magic cord which holds him and advances against Asgard, his gaping jaws filling the whole heaven. He devours the sun, and darkness comes upon the world. The giants arrive in a ship, said by Snorri to be made from the uncut nails of the dead, which has been long in the making; Loki, traitor to the gods, is with them for he has now, like the wolf, broken loose from his chains. The sons of Muspell, the forces from the land of fire led by the giant Surt, advance across the rainbow bridge which links earth and heaven, and it breaks beneath their weight. The World Serpent emerges from the sea, and as he rises from the waves a flood begins to invade the earth. The forces of giants and monsters encounter the gods on the great plain Vigrid, where the last battle must be fought.

The gods are awakened to their peril by the horn of Heimdall, the watcher by the bridge, and by the crowing of the cock on the World Tree. Odin, who knew when Balder perished that the time of doom was approaching, rides swiftly to Mimir's pool to learn what is to come. Then he calls out his huge army of heroes through the many doors of Valhalla to advance against the enemy. He himself goes forward to meet the wolf, and is devoured. Thor meets his ancient adversary, the World Serpent, and strikes it down with his hammer, but is overcome by its poison and falls beside it. Tyr encounters the hound Garm, and each slays the other. Heimdall and Loki do battle together and both are destroyed. Freyr meets Surt, but has no sword to match the dazzling weapon of the fire giant. At the end Surt flings fire over the earth, and men perish with the gods as the land is engulfed by the encroaching sea.

A New Earth

Yet in this universal holocaust, some survive. The young sons of the gods do not perish; Odin's son Vidar slays the wolf by setting a foot on its lower jaw and tearing it apart; the sons of Thor inherit their father's hammer, which once more will defend the world from chaos. The mysterious power Hoenir survives, and Balder returns from the dead to live in peace beside his slayer Hoder. It would seem that these gods who are to rule the new universe have been sheltered in the World Tree, for from the Tree emerge the man and woman who are to repeople the world of men. Earth now rises anew from the sea, green and fresh and fair, and a new sun, fairer than her mother, journeys over the heavens.

There is much argument among scholars as to the origin of these traditions; the possibility of Eastern influences has been mentioned, while Christian teachings about Doomsday may also have played their part. But *Völuspá* is no mere scholarly exercise, but a great poem in its own right, and the vision of death and rebirth which it offers is the essence of all the great religions. Scattered evidence from other poems and carvings of scenes from Ragnarok on crosses of the Viking Age show that the conception was widespread over the Viking world. Part of the poem's power is that Ragnarok can be taken as a symbol of the dissolution by death or mental breakdown of the individual, and that it visualizes the overcoming of order by chaos, to be replaced, after the agony, by a new creation. It is one of the greatest achievements of the world of northern mythology.

(See also GERMANIC MYTHOLOGY.)

H. R. ELLIS DAVIDSON

FURTHER READING: B. Branston, *Gods and Heroes from Viking Mythology* (Schocken, 1982); H. R. Ellis Davidson, *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe* (Penguin, 1965), *Pagan Scandinavia* (Thames and Hudson, London, 1967); and *Scandinavian Mythology* (Hamlyn, London, 1969).

In the 9th century Viking armies occupied large areas of England: plaster cast of a Viking gravestone, found in St Paul's churchyard, London, and now in the Guildhall Museum

SCAPEGOAT

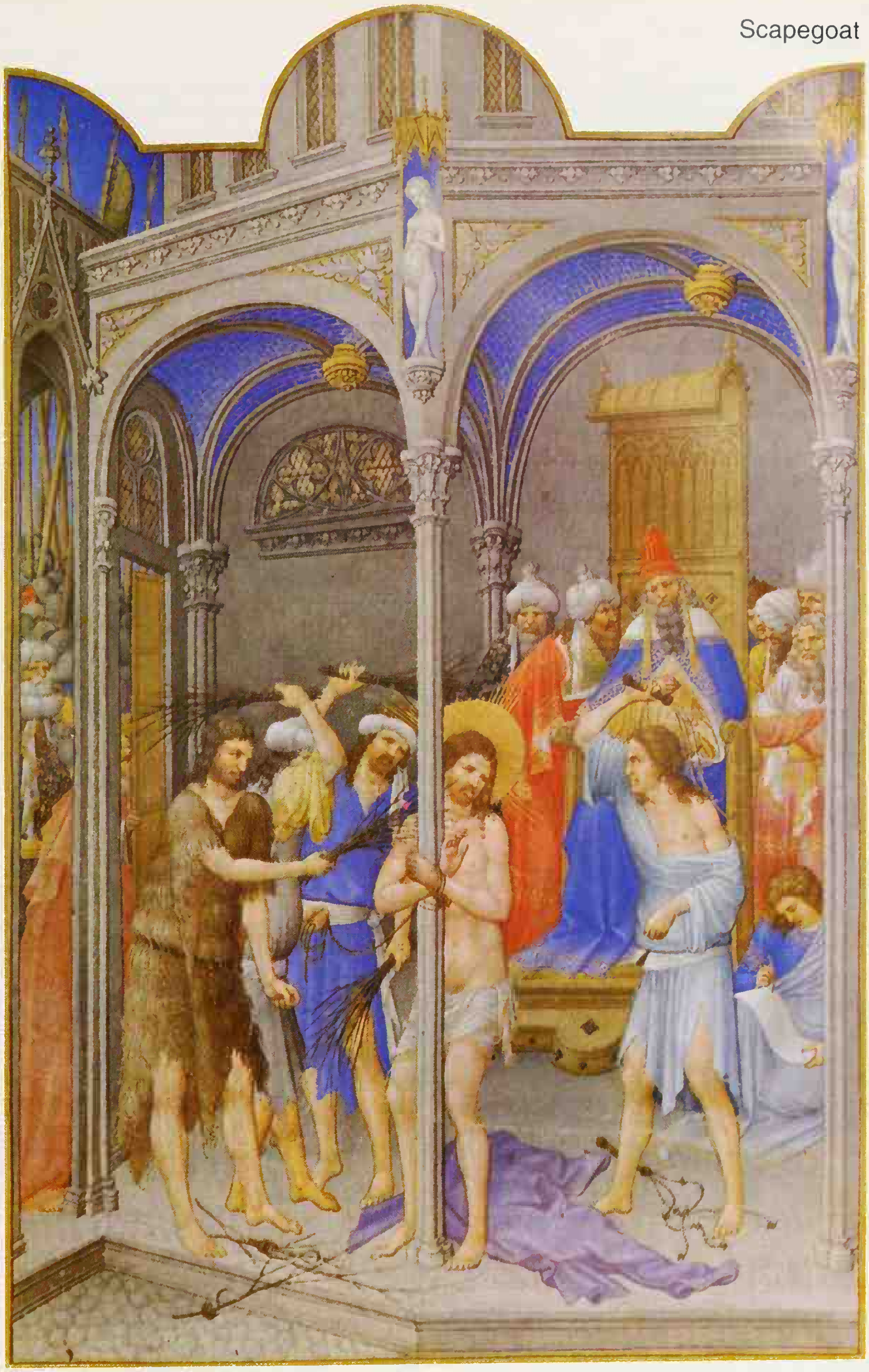
THE ANCIENT HEBREWS who invented the idea had no word for 'scapegoat'. The goat in question first makes its appearance in Leviticus, chapter 16. Its function, as part of the expiatory rites performed by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, is to have all the sins of the children of Israel put upon its head, and to carry them away into the wilderness. The goat, so to speak, escapes with a burden of alien sin – hence its name. But it is not a name that occurs in the original Hebrew of the Book of Leviticus. It is true that the Authorized Version speaks of the high priest Aaron taking two goats and casting lots upon them, 'one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat'. But in the Hebrew it says, 'one lot for Yahweh (Jehovah), and the other for Azazel'. To this day, no one is absolutely sure who or what Azazel was, but when William Tyndale (c 1495–1536) made his translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew text, he also had the Greek and Latin versions at his elbow, and he took a hint from them to translate the mysterious Azazel as 'scapegoat'. In subsequent verses of the same chapter of Leviticus, however, Tyndale had to twist both the English and the Hebrew syntax to make sense of the word Azazel, and he wrote of letting the goat go 'for a scapegoat', when he should have written 'to Azazel'.

The point is of more than linguistic interest. Most authorities on the subject take Azazel to have been a demon that lived in the desert. He is not mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament, but the author of the apocryphal book of Enoch evidently took Azazel to be a demon from his reading of this chapter of Leviticus, and developed an elaborate legend about him, on which Milton drew when he made Azazel Satan's standard-bearer in *Paradise Lost*. If Azazel was a demon, then the ritual described in Leviticus was intended to symbolize the purging of the land and people of Israel from guilt and the transmission of their sins, on the goat's back, to the evil spirit to whom they were believed to belong, and whose abode was in the desert, cut off from human habitation. It is also possible that the goat was chosen for this task because goats were sacrificed to Azazel in illicit pagan rituals.

The meaning of the name Azazel is disputed, some scholars connecting it with an Arabic word meaning 'to place far apart'. But some early Jewish authorities interpreted Azazel as the name of a 'strong and difficult place', and this seems to be the interpretation followed by the translators of the New English Bible (1970). They translate *azazel* as 'precipice', and write of 'the goat on which the lot of the Precipice has fallen'. But this makes the marked antithesis between Yahweh and Azazel feeble, to say the least.

In view of the less well-defined meaning given to the term in modern usage, where anyone from the late Stephen Ward to Lieutenant William Calley can be hailed as a 'scapegoat', it is necessary to dwell on one or two features of the ritual described in Leviticus. In the first place, the goat chosen to be sent to Azazel may be assumed to be entirely innocent of the sins which he is transmitting. Secondly, it is significant that the goat is chosen from among two by lot, so that an element of chance or randomness is introduced deliberately into the ritual. Thirdly, and most importantly, the scapegoat is not sacrificed to Azazel (or anyone else): its blood is not shed. Indeed, it would have been sacrilegious in the extreme to have made a sacrifice of it to an evil spirit. The scapegoat is made to stand alive before Yahweh, but it is the other goat that is sacrificed to him.

This needs to be emphasized, because Jesus Christ is sometimes spoken of as a scapegoat. It is true that the scapegoat is also a vicarious 'carrier' of the sins of others, and that he figures in a rite of atonement. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ atones for the sins of humanity which he did not himself commit, but, unlike the scapegoat, he does suffer a sacrificial death. In his epistle to the Hebrews, Saint Paul talks of the blood of Christ being incomparably more efficacious to purge the Hebrews' consciences than the blood of bulls and goats offered in sacrifice. But as the scapegoat was never regarded as an offering to anyone, least of all to God, the notion of the scapegoat is not developed in the New Testament



The scourging of Christ, from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*: Jesus has frequently been thought of as a scapegoat, in the sense that by his suffering and death he atoned for the sins of others

Giraudon

and later Christian doctrines of atonement and salvation through Christ.

The Hebrew institution of the scapegoat is not without parallels in other cultures, and may have been derived from earlier Semitic or even Sumerian rituals. An ancient Babylonian text suggests that one way of curing a pain in the neck in the second millennium BC was to sacrifice the neck of a beast, and there is a reference to the 'horned animal which alleviates pain'. The meaning of these texts is often obscure, and keenly disputed by scholars, but a sacred poem enjoining a sick king to fire an arrow which will shoot his sickness away into a gazelle points to the idea of an animal carrying human disease away. In a well-known chapter of *The Golden Bough*, Sir James Frazer cites examples from many places in the world of the demons or afflictions of whole communities being carried away by animals or in boats committed to the sea or a river.

The Substitute Victim

If the Hebrews did take over an ancient pagan custom, they characteristically gave it a spiritual content by making the goat take away not disease or physical affliction, but the sins and errors of the people themselves. But even this adaptation of the scapegoat idea is not confined to ancient Israel. Frazer quotes a Victorian missionary's account of the sacrifice of a 20-year-old girl in a village in Nigeria, who was dragged alive along the ground, face downwards, from the king's house to the river, a distance of two miles, as if carrying away the 'weight of all their wickedness'. Two human victims, it seems, were sacrificed annually, after they had been purchased from the interior of the country with money raised by public subscription. 'All persons,' writes Frazer, 'who during the past year had fallen into gross sins, such as incendiarism, theft, adultery, witchcraft, and so forth, were expected to contribute 28 *ngugas*, or a little over £2.'

Frazer was more interested in points of similarity between geographically widespread cultures than in their differences, so that his examples of 'scapegoats' only approximate to the scapegoat of Hebrew ritual. It will be noted that in the Nigerian example the notion of a substitute victim is present, and the evil which it is intended to drive away is spiritual rather than physical; the ritual is also, as the Hebrew ritual became eventually, if it was not so from the beginning, an annual one. But the Nigerian custom differs in the important point that the substitute victim actually was put to death, whereas in ancient Israel it was merely banished.

Nearer to the Hebrew conception in some respects is the custom reported in the 16th century from Halberstadt in Thüringen of turning a man 'believed to be stained with heinous sins' out into the city streets throughout Lent and, in particular, refusing him admittance to any church. The man in question (a new man was chosen each year) was finally readmitted to church and absolved from his sins on the day before Good Friday. But again this human scapegoat differs from the goat in Leviticus, in being himself a sinner. Another example of a human scapegoat cited by Frazer is based on a Byzantine account, derived in turn from the Greek poet Hipponax of Ephesus (6th century BC). It was the custom in the time of Hipponax, when a city was visited by plague or famine, to choose an ugly or deformed person to take upon himself all the evils afflicting the city. He was brought to a suitable place, where dried figs, a barley loaf, and cheese were put into his hand. When he had eaten these, he was beaten seven times on his genital organs with squills and wild fig tree branches (thought to avert evil influences, and so, in this instance, to guarantee the power of the sexual organs to ward off evil), and then sacrificed on a pyre, after which his ashes were cast into the sea.

These examples resemble the ancient Hebrew ritual only in their use of a substitute victim onto whom a whole community can project its ills. It may be that this answers to a universal human impulse, and that the Leviticus scapegoat in this respect typifies a universal element in human culture; but to the modern investigator, the unique features of the Hebrew ritual – the innocence of the victim, its selection by lot, and the fact that it was let loose and not killed in sacrifice – are no less interesting than the broader meaning of the ritual which has made the scapegoat a familiar notion throughout much of the inhabited world.

(See also ATONEMENT; SIN EATER.)

DAVID PHILLIPS

SCARAB

THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS made numerous amulets, of which the most familiar is the scarab. Fashioned out of various materials, scarabs have been found in Egypt on habitation sites, in tombs and on mummies (see MUMMIFICATION). These amulets are usually oval in shape, one side being convex and the other flat. The convex side is carved or moulded to represent the back of a beetle; the flat side generally bears a hieroglyphic inscription.

The name 'scarab' has been given to amulets of this kind by Egyptologists, because they represent the *scarabaeus*, a beetle of the genus *Lamellicorn*. The reason why the Egyptians chose the image of this particular beetle for an amulet is twofold; its explanation affords a significant insight into their thought and imagery.

The Egyptian name for the scarab beetle was *kheprer(i)*. The verb *kheper* meant 'to believe', or 'to come into existence'; while *kheperu* signified 'forms', or 'stages of growth and development'. The Egyptians also called the sun god *Khepri*, because to them he was 'He who exists himself', that is, was self-existent. In turn, they believed that he was the creator of the world and the source or author of life. The similarity of the scarab beetle's name to that of the sun god therefore held a deep significance, which was reinforced by another curious fact.

It is the habit of the scarab beetle, which feeds on dung, to make a ball of dung and roll it into a hole which it has already prepared. The beetle enters the hole, closing the entrance, and lives there until it has consumed the ball. Certain ancient writers have recorded the significant analogy which the Egyptians drew from this remarkable habit. The Roman author Pliny explains: 'The people of a great part of Egypt worship these insects as divinities; an usage for which Apion gives a curious reason, asserting as he does, by way of justifying the rites of his nation, that the insect in its operations pictures the revolutions of the sun.' According to Horapollo, a late Egyptian writer, the scarab beetle 'rolls the ball from east to west, looking himself toward the east. Having dug a hole, he buries it for twenty-eight days; on the twenty-ninth day he opens the ball, and throws it into the water, and from it the scarabaei come forth.'

University Films

A jewel from the tomb of Tutankhamen: the body of the winged scarab is a translucent quartz, and above it is the eye of Horus

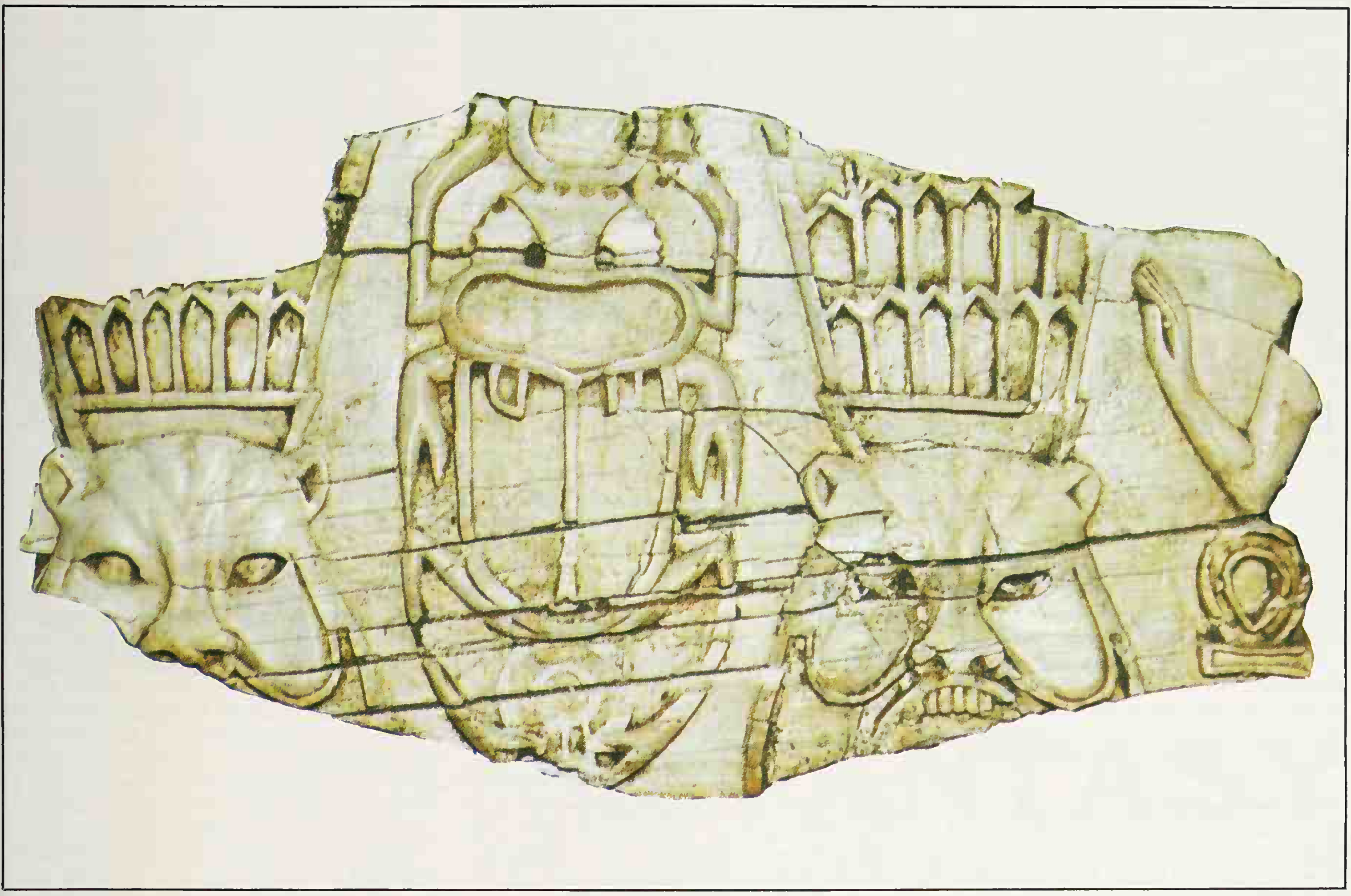
The curious idea which Horapollo expresses here, that the male scarab beetle thus produced the young, is more clearly stated by the Greek writer Plutarch: 'The Egyptians also honoured . . . the beetle, since they observed in them certain dim likenesses of the power of the gods, like images of the sun in drops of water . . . The race of beetles has no female, but all the males eject their sperm into a round pellet of material which they roll up by pushing it from the opposite side, just as the sun seems to turn the heavens in the direction opposite to its own course, which is from west to east.'

This quaint error that scarab beetles were of male sex only, together with their habit of rolling balls of dung and the suggestion contained in their name, all conspired to produce a strange piece of religious imagery. Since Re, the sun god, is called *Khepri*, the 'Self-Existent One', who of himself generated all forms of existence (see CREATION MYTHS), and since he rolls the ball of the sun daily across the sky, he must be the original divine Scarab. Thus, in religious iconography Re is frequently represented as a large black scarab beetle, sitting in the solar boat and rolling the sun disc, or as a man whose human head is replaced by a scarab beetle. This strange imagery was already current by the middle of the third millennium BC, as the following passage from the Pyramid Texts shows. It concerns the union, or reunion, of the deceased pharaoh Unas with the sun god. 'This Unas flieth like a bird and alighteth like a beetle upon the throne which is empty in thy boat, O Re.' There are even more ancient indications of the currency of this evaluation of the scarab beetle; for jars of them have been found in graves dating from before 3500 BC.

The significance that the Egyptians saw in the scarab beetle rendered its image an amulet of supreme potency. For it represented Re, the sun god, as the source of all existence and thus was itself, in terms of sympathetic magic, endowed with vitalizing virtue. Hence its use as a life-giving amulet for the dead was obvious. But it was used also by the living as a talisman, conferring daily well-being and protection against evil. The inscriptions cut upon the flat side were very varied. Some give the names and titles of the owner, often with a pious or 'good luck' phrase; many have the names of pharaohs, since these were names of great magical power. The authentic 'royal scarabs' are of considerable historical value, especially those of the New Kingdom (1567–1085 BC), when the custom grew up of recording historical events on them.

The most notable scarab amulet was the 'heart scarab'. This was placed upon the breast of the mummy and inscribed with chapter 30 of the Book of the Dead. The text contained a petition addressed by the dead person to his heart, asking it not to witness against him when it was weighed against the symbol of truth at the awful judgement after death (see BOOK OF THE DEAD; JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD).

S. G. F. BRANDON



Scarab on a Phoenician ivory of the 8th century BC, probably intended for export to Egypt, where the beetle was an emblem of the sun god and a life-giving and protective amulet

C. M. Dixon

SCHNEIDER BROTHERS

SONS of a printer of Braunau in Upper Austria, Willi and Rudi Schneider, born respectively in 1903 and 1908, were among the most famous physical mediums of the 20th century. Willi's mediumistic talent was discovered when he was 16, while the family were playing at 'table-turning' (see OUIJA BOARDS). It was reported that a little tripod, one of the legs of which was a pencil, wrote messages in answer to questions put by the Schneiders, and that when Willi's hand was hovering over it, the planchette wrote by itself.

In answer to the question 'Who is there?' the pencil wrote 'Olga', and continued to write that the person 'there' was Lola Montez, the celebrated mistress of King Ludwig of Bavaria. 'Olga' is not on record as having insisted on her identity with Lola after the first sitting. Nor was she, so far as we can tell, ever able to answer any questions about Lola; nor did she speak any English, which Lola spoke perfectly.

Other phenomena soon manifested themselves: objects were reported to move about and ectoplasmic formations were observed. Willi began to fall into trances during which he spoke as 'Olga'. Captain F. Kogelnik, a retired Austrian naval officer resident in Braunau, became convinced of Willi's genuineness and brought the medium to the attention of Dr Albert von Schrenck-Notzing. The latter conducted extensive experiments with Willi, including a protracted investigation in conjunction with the Psychological Institute of the University of Munich, which involved numerous independent scientists and doctors, most of whom became convinced that the phenomena were genuine.

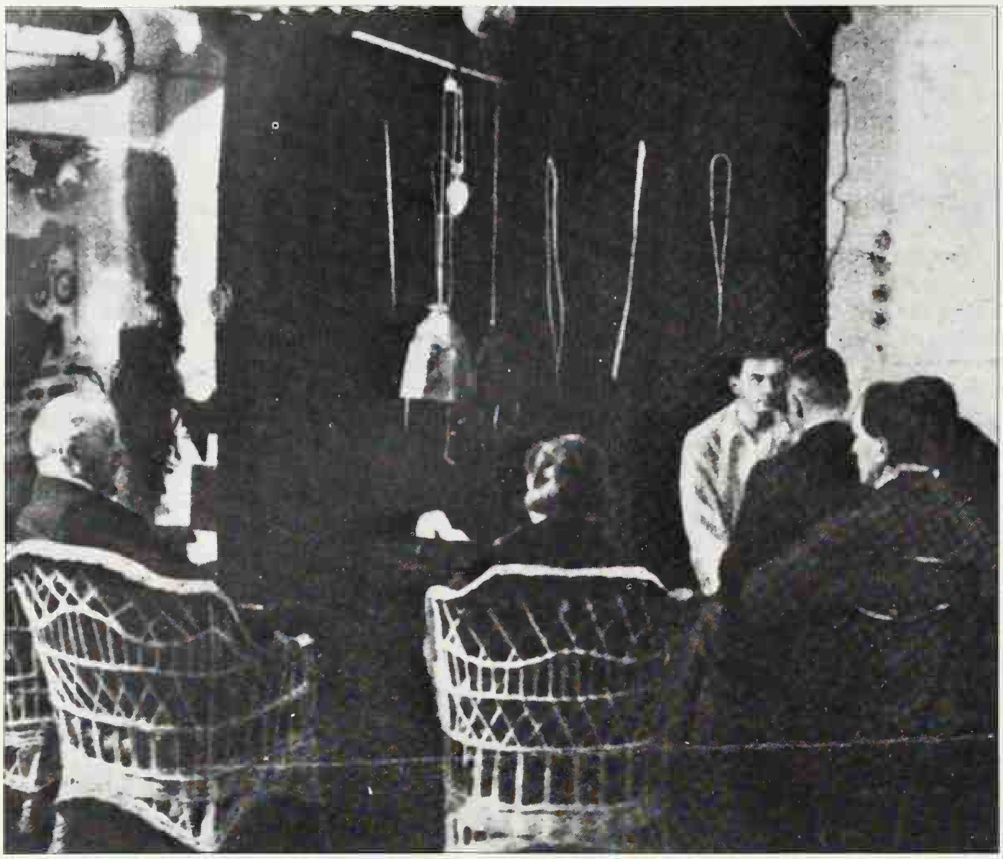
In 1921 Dr E. J. Dingwall, then research officer of the Society for Psychical Research, and Harry Price attended a carefully controlled sitting at Schrenck-Notzing's laboratory in Munich. Dingwall was one of those who controlled the medium, and after the sitting Price and Dingwall searched the seance room. Strong phenomena were observed: a table was moved, a handkerchief and bracelet were levitated and a hand-bell was rung, though no ectoplasm, claimed on other occasions, was observed. Most of the phenomena took place in a gauze cage, the open side of which faced away from the medium and was beyond his reach. Dingwall gave his opinion that the medium himself could not have produced the phenomena observed, that confederacy alone could have accounted *normally* for what happened, but that this seemed 'inconceivable in the circumstances'.

Willi was subsequently investigated in England under the auspices of the S.P.R. in November and December 1924 by Woolley and Dingwall, and again movements of objects were observed, but no ectoplasm.

'Olga' Demands Rudi

Willi's phenomena gradually diminished in frequency and intensity, and his sittings were increasingly blank. One day, when he was giving yet another negative sitting, 'Olga' announced that his little brother, Rudi, was a stronger medium than Willi and that 'she' wanted him. The boys' mother protested: Rudi was only 11 years old, and far too young. But 'Olga' was adamant: 'she' wanted Rudi. At that point, it is said, the door opened and in walked Rudi, apparently deeply asleep, talking as 'Olga'. His trance was marked by the same characteristics which had accompanied Willi's when he 'was Olga', notably phenomenally rapid breathing. Willi developed another trance personality, 'Mina', and 'Olga' confined herself to Rudi alone, with whom, so far as we know, 'she' remained for the rest of his life.

Rudi was one of the most exhaustively investigated and carefully controlled physical mediums of all time. Apart from giving hundreds of sittings under more or less informal conditions in and about his home town of Braunau, Rudi was investigated over a number of years and with increasingly strict controls by Schrenck-Notzing, who trained him from boyhood as a 'scientific medium', that is, one willing to accept any and every control and whatever test conditions the experimenters demanded.



The double exposure photograph, showing Rudi Schneider with his arm out behind him, which Harry Price used in an attempt to discredit the medium

Harry Price Library, London University

The phenomena were similar to those reported in connection with Willi: the most frequent and best attested were movements of objects, while among the earlier phenomena, not often subsequently observed, were visible materializations. Levitations of the whole body of the medium were also reported, principally in the home circle, but also by Schrenck-Notzing and some of his medical and scientific collaborators.

Rudi was subjected to three investigations by Harry Price at the National Laboratory for Psychical Research in London, in 1929 and 1932. He was also investigated at great length and with elaborate apparatus by Dr Eugene Osty in Paris between October 1930 and December 1931. Instrumental recordings were obtained with infra-red radiation of interference by 'an invisible substance'. These observations were first made by Dr Osty, who had installed an infra-red network which surrounded the objects to be moved paranormally, as an anti-fraud precaution: if anything, such as a reaching device or a human arm, approached the experimental table it had first to cross the infra-red beams, and as soon as this happened a system of alarm bells and photographic flashlights would come into action. The alarm system was indeed set off, but by no visible agency: photographs taken at the time showed that the infra-red rays had been interrupted by, ostensibly, nothing. These interruptions of the network coincided with 'Olga's' announcements to the effect that 'she was going into the ray'. Such occultations or blocking of the infra-red rays preceded actual paranormal movements of small objects, such as handkerchiefs.

Similar results were obtained in London. The physicists principally concerned with the infra-red radiation research in London – Lord Rayleigh, Professor of Physics at Imperial College, London, C.C.L. Gregory, Wilson Observer in Astronomy and Director of the University of London Observatory, and C.V.C. Herbert, research officer of the S.P.R. – all remained satisfied that no experimental error could account for the results obtained.

After the Hope-Rayleigh investigation Rudi's mediumship diminished more and more, movements of even the smallest objects were hardly ever reported and occultations of the infra-red rays increasingly failed to occur. A further investigation by the S.P.R., under the guidance of O. Gatty and T. Besterman between October 1933 and March 1934, was negative.

However, Professor Gustav Schwaiger conducted a lengthy series in Vienna, from April 1935 to May 1936, which he regarded as definitely providing evidence of paranormal movement of objects, though he failed to obtain any recording on his infrared apparatus. He did obtain photographs of a substance ostensibly composed of threads, which left its traces on carefully prepared bearing plates.

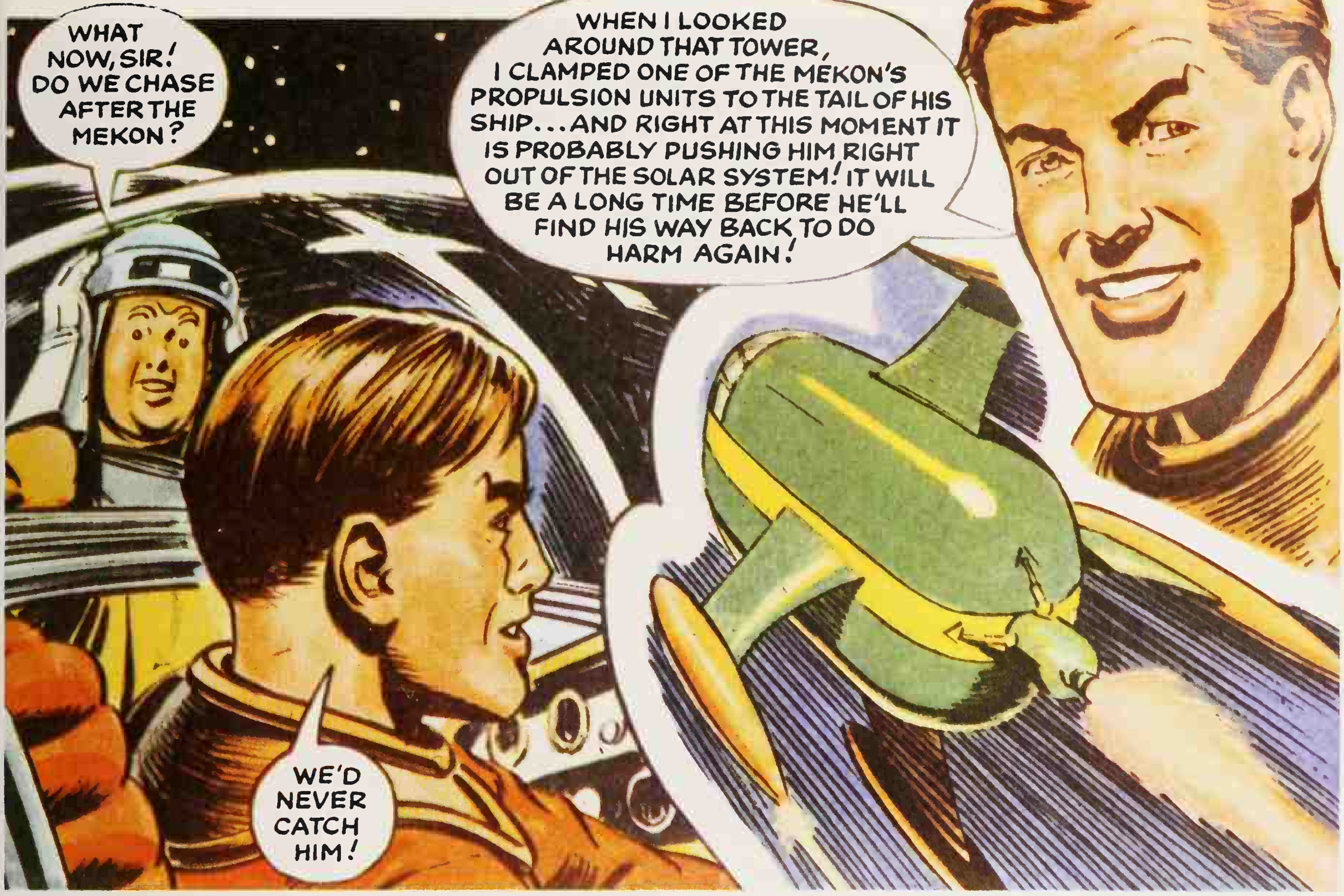
Was Rudi a Fraud?

A number of accusations of fraud were levelled against Rudi. The most damaging attack was launched by Harry Price, who published a photograph purporting to show Rudi's arm freed from control while phenomena were allegedly occurring. Price had contrived a device whereby a handkerchief was so balanced on a counterpoise table that, if the handkerchief was moved, a camera flash would be released, taking a photograph of the handkerchief in the air.

Price claimed that he had accidentally obtained a double exposure while he was himself controlling the medium. The first of these exposures showed Rudi's arm freed and stretched out towards the handkerchief, and the second showed Rudi's arm once more inserted into Price's hand. Price said that his failure to notice all this was due to a toothache. Most of the experimenters who had worked with Rudi, however, believed that the first exposure showed Rudi's hand controlled, the second as free from control; in other words, the handkerchief was levitated, and the resulting flash made Rudi jerk his hand free. A prolonged and heated controversy ensued.

Eventually, Rudi's phenomena grew feebler, particularly when outsiders were present, and he increasingly concentrated on making a living. He died of a stroke on 28 April 1957.

ANITA GREGORY*


WHAT NOW, SIR! DO WE CHASE AFTER THE MEKON?
WHEN I LOOKED AROUND THAT TOWER, I CLAMPED ONE OF THE MEKON'S PROPULSION UNITS TO THE TAIL OF HIS SHIP...AND RIGHT AT THIS MOMENT IT IS PROBABLY PUSHING HIM RIGHT OUT OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM! IT WILL BE A LONG TIME BEFORE HE'LL FIND HIS WAY BACK TO DO HARM AGAIN!
WE'D NEVER CATCH HIM!

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SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY

THE REALM OF THE FANTASTIC in literature is vast. It is, in fact, altogether too enormous. If we defined as 'fantastic' any phenomenon deemed unreal or impossible or unverifiable through currently accepted scientific means, and if we defined as 'literature' any manifestation of the profound human impulse to tell stories, then we could almost certainly discover some tale of fantasy relevant to every topic discussed in this entire encyclopedia. But in the present context it is not germane to regard all of myth and legend and folklore as forms of fantasy, nor to treat examples from classical literature as conscious premonitions of the genre of science fiction.

The key term is consciousness. Fantasy proper begins at that historical point in the 18th century when writers began to become conscious that realism was a doctrine, and that the dominance of the mimetic novel might have cast a strong new light upon human nature and upon the world, but that it had also crippled the human imagination. Certain dreams could no longer be dreamed in public, for anything which touched on the fabulous was relegated to the nursery: unheard-of creatures, unplumbed depths of human possibility, landscapes as yet unseen by mortals, other worlds, other realms, other beings, all were despised as being essentially childish.

William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (c 1610) would almost certainly not have been written 150 years later, and certainly would not have reached the stage as a new creation. To the 18th-century mind, Prospero was a fraud, Ariel and Caliban were chimaeras and the profound Shakespearian magic – through which every creature on the island strays into a dream-like wood and emerges transfigured – was nothing more than a confidence-game.

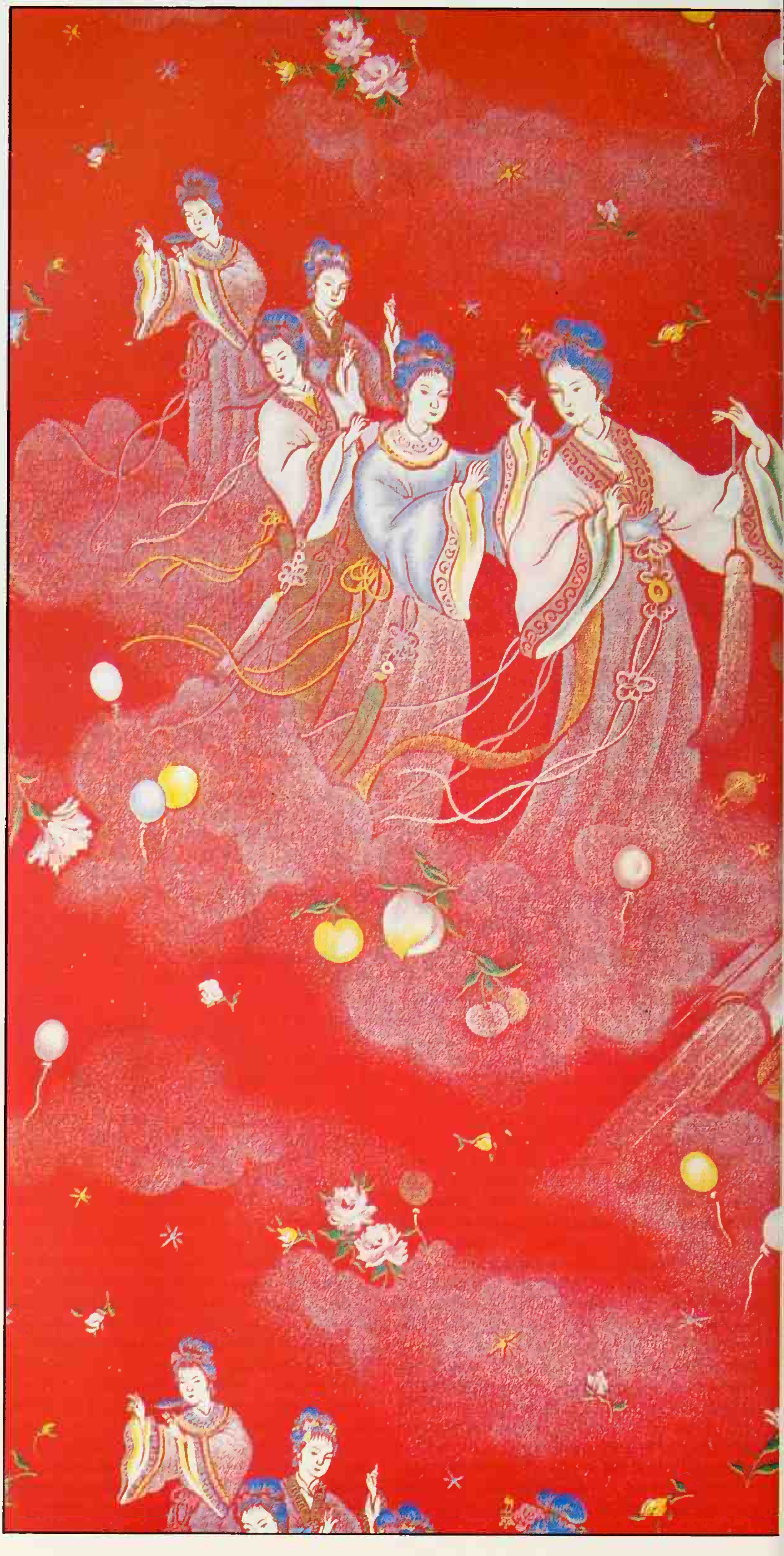
For 18th-century scholars, what seemed most significant about *The Tempest* was Prospero's giving up of his pretence to being a magus; for us (and perhaps for Shakespeare as well) what is important is not only Prospero's retirement, but that world from which he retires. The first conscious attempts at fantasy could almost be defined as attempts to recapture the empowerment, the vision and mastery of the thresholds of perception, that Prospero casts down at the very end of his – and his maker's – career.

Fantasy is *The Tempest* reborn. It is a subversive response to the 'real' world defined by writers like Henry Fielding or Samuel Richardson, an attempt to recapture a fuller spectrum of response to the mysteriousness of being, and to introject an element of chaos into the Enlightenment vision of an orderly, mechanical universe. A writer like Horace Walpole, whose *The Castle of Otranto* (1765) is the first Gothic novel, lived much of his life in a state of intense dream-like nostalgia for a time of shadows, romance, hauntings, disarray. His vision of the miraculous chiaroscuro of the medieval world was not, perhaps, very accurate in an historical sense; but it served as a clear signal – and releaser – to his many readers and imitators that chaos and old night were legitimate subjects. The self-consciousness of his assault upon the time in which he lived is nowhere more explicit than in the subtitle he affixed to the second edition of his novel: he called it *A Gothic Story*. The gauntlet was cast down.

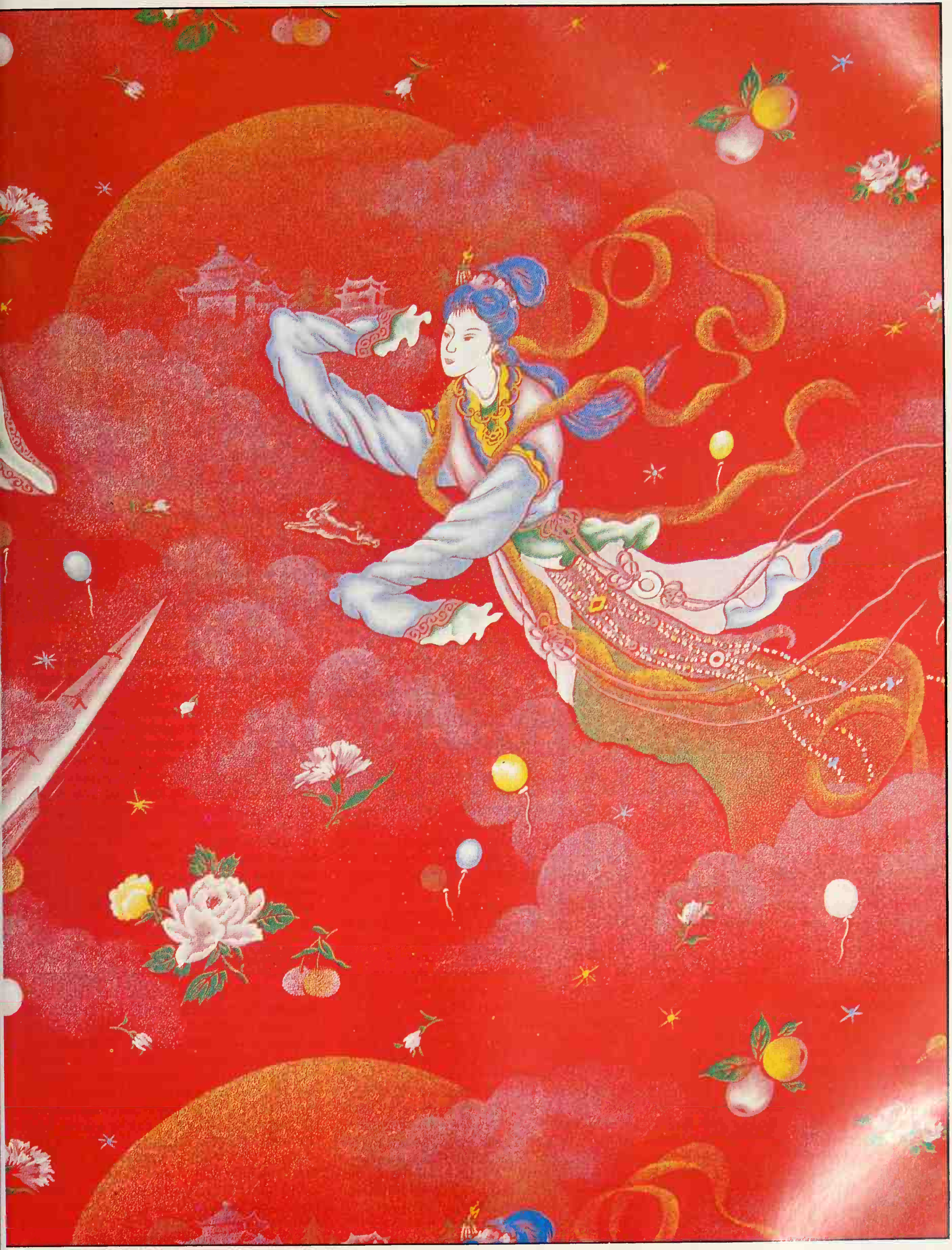
The Castle of Otranto itself is full of marvels, containing deeply hidden secrets whose revelation has an explosive effect on the tame daylit perspectives of 1765, and an obsessed superman who reminds one of Milton's Satan, and of course the Castle itself, a labyrinthine edifice so complex and fraught with psychological symbolism that it has more than once been likened to an analogue of the human brain. As a novel it is comparatively slight, for Walpole was not a creative mind of the highest intensity; but as a depository of themes and symbols of the most vital interest to twentieth century humanity, it is far more evocative than any of the novels of the Great Tradition to which so much attention has been paid over the centuries. With *The Castle of Otranto*, 'enlightened' Western humanity begins to reinhabit, and once again to explore, some of the dark depths of the human psyche.

Horace Walpole wrote another book as well, very much less well known but also of interest in its pushing back yet another of the shrunken boundaries. *The Castle of Otranto* is a tale of the interior of the mind, and pays relatively little heed to exteriors, either mental or physical; but *Hieroglyphic Tales* (1785) begins an exploration of fantasy landscapes that led, a century later, to the creation of entire High Fantasy worlds where the human drama might play itself out in unfettered surroundings. These *Tales* are simpler, and very slender indeed; but they open the way back to the magical territories occupied by *The Thousand and One Nights*, opening once again to the Western world a chance to inscribe its dreams upon the terrains of the Marvellous.

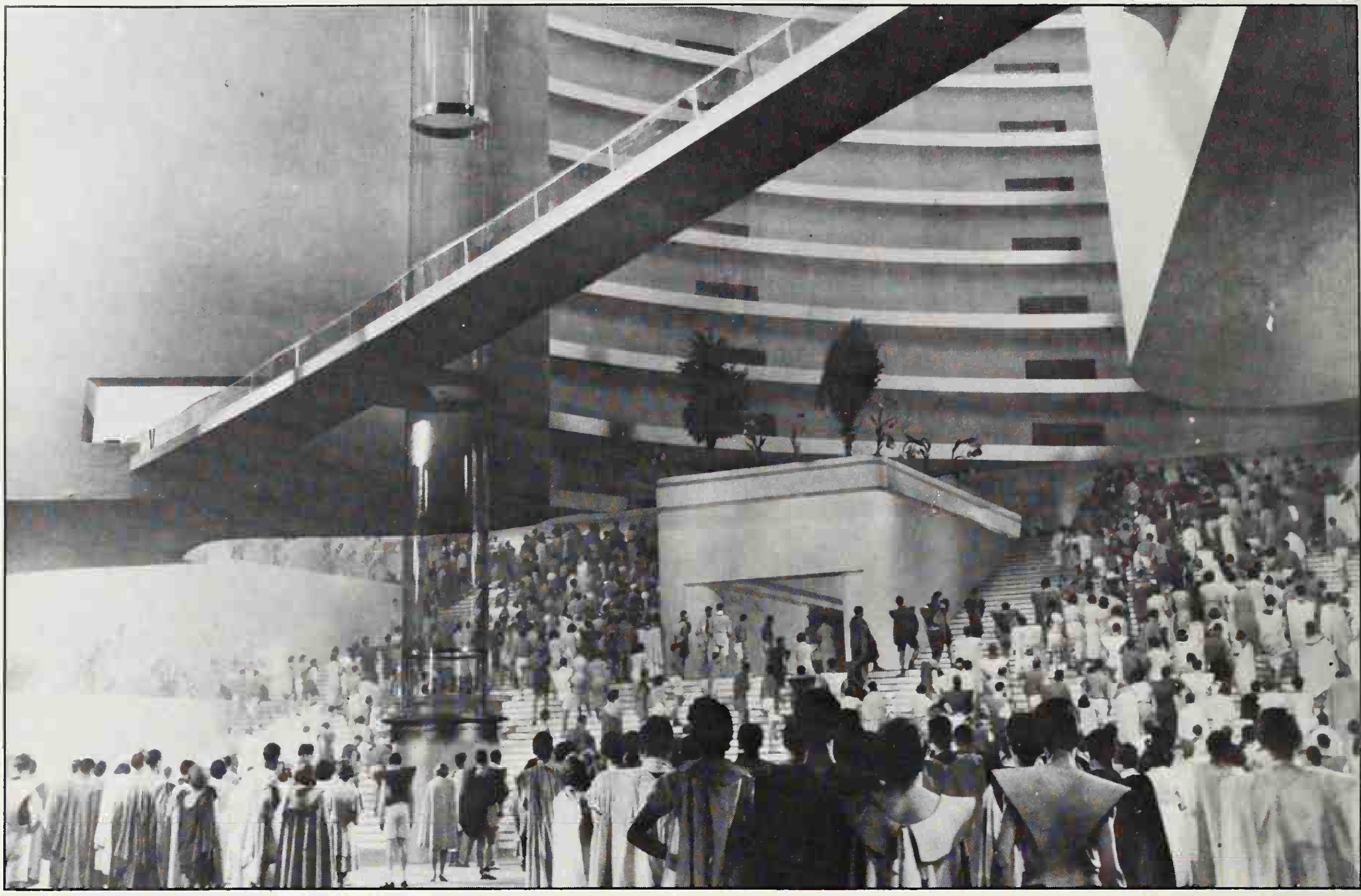
The remaining years of the 18th century, and the first decades of the 19th, saw an explosion of Gothic novels in England, and of literary dream fantasies in Europe, which explored some of the same subterranean



Fear of man's attempts to raise himself to the level of the gods is a common theme, but this Chinese textile confidently salutes the successful launching of Sputnik and shows the gods waiting to greet the spacecraft in heaven: from the collection of Pearl Binder



Pearl Binder



National Film Archive

The stories of H.G. Wells, one of the most prolific and influential of all science fiction writers – he has been rightly called the father of science fiction – read as though they could have been written yesterday, and the visions and fears they project come across to late 20th-century readers with perfect clarity. He dealt, to use his own terrifying phrase, with 'the rational souls of men who are lost in madness on the earth'. It is hard to think of any of the preoccupations of most contemporary science fiction which Wells did not explore first: they include invisibility, time travel, man-eating plants, telekinesis, alternative universes, planetary collision, advertising run wild, a society dominated by the young. Scene from *Things to Come*, a film made in 1936 and based upon a story by Wells

chambers of the mind. Many of these tales were routine, but the best of them exemplified what may be the most significant contribution fantasy has made to the human race's long campaign to gain understanding of self. The most daring and most profound artists seem always, at some level, to be aware of the profound danger inherent in succumbing to convention or fixity, in surrendering to the ineradicable human habit of normalizing the world. When the world is normalized, much is lost, and dreams have little purchase.

Secret Sharer of the Psyche

Great artists always threaten to dislodge our perceptions from the habitual; they always push us towards the edge of perception. For a century, the best fantasy written in the Western world performed a similar function. By subverting the mimetic novel, fantasy also tended to question our very perceptions of the world.

To the secure assertions of the 'normal' novel, fantasy tales responded with a contrary 'yes, but'. Time and space became insecure – protagonists of fantasy tales frequently fell through abysses of time, or stumbled into labyrinths without egress. Identity became problematical – one of the great central themes of the fantasy tale, from almost the beginning of its history, was the *doppelgänger*, the secret sharer of the psyche who haunted one's dreams. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) was the culmination of a century of malign doubles in the literature of fantasy, and remains, a century later, an absolutely central icon of our long search to understand our dreams, our fears, the depths of the unconscious self which wells up in fantasy (but shrivels in the daylight of the mimetic novel).

An essential element of the subversive in classic fantasy lies in its capacity precisely to liberate the unconscious, to open the world of story to the heart-rending complexities of the sleeping self; but at the same time to warn us that there are sometimes very good reasons for remaining on the surface of events, that to explore the interior of the labyrinth may well be extremely costly.

The Modern Prometheus

Long before Stevenson's culminating fable, however, fantasy had generated a counter-statement, one which would come, through its own progeny, to dominate the literature of the fantastic for over a century. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) is a novel of horror, a dark fantasy whose effect on readers can be genuinely disruptive; but it is also perhaps the first full-fledged science fiction novel. Even though it is easy enough to read the book's message as a warning against trying to know too much of the mysteries of God's universe, its subtitle – subtitles are often of great significance – should also be kept very much in mind.

Mary Shelley subtitled her book *The Modern Prometheus*. It was Prometheus who stole the secrets of the Gods and brought them down to humanity; her reference to him can be understood, just as much fantasy can so be understood, as an act of defiance against a fixed world, but with a difference. Where true fantasy casts its net backwards into the depths of the psyche, and into the Edens of the ideal landscape, science fiction casts its net forwards and futurewards into an exterior world which can be understood by the tools of thought and technology. The gift of Prometheus is the ability to understand and manipulate the physical world. Frankenstein is a Promethean Man, and the Monster he creates is an outcome of science. In the book that tells their tale, a new literature is born.

Both fantasy and science fiction, therefore, were born as acts of subversion, and for a considerable time it was well understood that both genres were intrinsically

By subverting the mimetic novel, fantasy also tended to question our very perceptions of the world

threatening. The one threatened to remind us who we were, and the other threatened to liberate us so that we could become what we wished to be.

Because they acted so close to the dream-work and substructure of the human story, both fantasy and science fiction, from the first, embodied fundamental mythic patterns. In fantasy, we find echoes of the myths that tell of Eden, of the double under the skin and in the mirror, of metamorphosis as punishment and aspiration, of the Hero with a Thousand Faces, of the sacrifice of the year-king so that the seasons may continue to turn, of all the cycles that bring back the spring, or the green man, or the lost monarch, or the forgotten childhood.

In science fiction, some of the same myths recur: the hero becomes a Competent Man who penetrates the new frontier; the double becomes the android or the robot, and serves humanity (or rebels against us); the metamorphosis of human into beast becomes the story of the human race in confrontation with alien species; Eden becomes the galaxy; but cyclical time – except in the vastest of cosmogonic tales, in which the universe ends and starts again – is transformed into linear time, because science fiction has always, until recent years, focused forward, into the future.

These myth-evoking patterns were clearest at the start of things, with Horace Walpole and Mary Shelley. As the 19th century passed, both fantasy and science fiction tended to become somewhat more respectable. The Victorian literary establishment successfully managed to ensure that tales of the impossible were published and consumed by children, although novels like George MacDonald's *Phantastes* (1858) were explicitly written for grown men and women.

The effect of this sequestration was perhaps damaging – it is fair to wonder what Charles Dickens might have written had he not clearly restricted his impulse to fantasticate either to Christmas whimsy or to the surface rhetoric of his full-scale novels – but it offered writers of fantasy a local habitation. On its part, science fiction evolved very slowly during the 19th century, perhaps through the lack of any identifiable market, and until the advent of H.G. Wells, who did not begin to publish until the 1890s, very rarely did a science fiction story grasp what might be called the nettle of transformation.

A Literature of Change

Science fiction, after all, was a literature of change, sometimes of profound change; but for 80 years precious little cognitive risk-taking could be detected in the texts which slowly came together to make up a primitive canon. There were some new inventions, but they had little pile-on effect; there were innumerable lost worlds, most of them deeply tedious and lacking in marvels; there were future-war novels, but most of these were bankrupt of any thought about the effects technology would have on warfare or society; and there were many utopias, most of them deeply conservative, deeply suspicious of the new, deeply antipathetic to the concept of breaking through into the future.

So it is not surprising that H.G. Wells has been called the father of science fiction, along with Jules Verne. Of the two, it is probably Wells who deserves the description, as Verne wrote something rather different. His 'Extraordinary Voyages' were almost always set in the present day, and featured inventions or speculations which were seldom technically impossible, according to contemporary science; what remains most striking about these many texts is the sense that geography itself is full of miracles, that just over the horizon one may find marvellous countries, strange doings and rites, new kinds of human enterprise. Our own world, for Verne, contains an infinity of marvels. English readers should remember, not at all incidentally, that Verne has been served atrociously by his translators, who bowdlerized, cut, and rewrote every single one of his books; the result is that the wonderment he expressed about the human condition has been almost fatally muffled for us.

Our luck has been greater with Wells. Even more than Robert Louis Stevenson or Arthur Conan Doyle, his books read as though they could have been written yesterday, and the visions and fears they project come across to we late 20th-century readers with perfect clarity. He is the creator – though he was never conscious of writing anything so described – of genre SF, the form of science fiction which became dominant about 1925 and only began to show signs of significant ageing around

Clothed in Air

And among the descendants of this Mr. Morris was one almost as sensible and clear-headed as his ancestor. He had just the same stout, short frame as that ancient man of the nineteenth century, from whom his name of Morris – he spelt it Mwres – came; he had the same half-contemptuous expression of face. He was a prosperous person, too, as times went, and he disliked the 'new-fangled', and bothers about the future and the lower classes, just as much as the ancestral Morris had done . . .

Of course his toilet differed very much from that of his ancsstor. It is doubtful which would have been the more shocked and pained to find himself in the clothing of the other. Mwres would certainly have sooner gone forth to the world stark naked than in the silk hat, frock coat, grey trousers and watch-chain that had filled Mr. Morris with sombre self-respect in the past. For Mwres there was no shaving to do: a skilful operator had long ago removed every hair-root from his face. His legs he encased in pleasant pink and amber garments of an air-tight material, which with the help of an ingenious little pump he distended so as to suggest enormous muscles. Above this he also wore pneumatic garments beneath an amber silk tunic, so that he was clothed in air and admirably protected against sudden extremes of heat or cold. Over this he flumg a scarlet cloak with its edge fantastically curved. On his head, which had been skilfully deprived of every scrap of hair, he adjusted a pleasant little cap of bright scarlet, held on by suction and inflated with hydrogen, and curiously like the comb of a cock. So his toilet was complete, and, conscious of being soberly and becomingly attired, he was ready to face his fellow beings with a tranquil eye.

H.G. Wells *A Story of the Days to Come*

1975. What H.G. Wells created was change.

At university he had been taught by Professor T.H. Huxley, the most prominent 19th-century advocate of Darwin's theory of evolution, and he embodied an evolutionary perspective in all his significant work. He believed in change, he believed change was constant and inevitable; and he knew how to put his beliefs into convincing fictional form. All previous writers had treated human beings as essentially unchangeable, or had subjected them to apocalyptic transformations which read as *faits accomplis* of God; Wells is the first writer of fiction on this planet to subject the human species to a comprehensive process of change.

Wells's first novel, *The Time Machine* (1895), has in fact become a contemporary myth about the future of our species. The Time Traveller constructs a Time Machine which looks rather like a bicycle, and travels into the future. Several hundred thousand years hence, he comes across a society of beautiful folk, the Eloi, whose elfin fragility fails to disguise an essential stupidity. He is entranced, but troubled, and his premonitions of something awry are confirmed by his discovery of the Morlocks, a brute underground society which preys upon the ethereal Eloi. On reflection he comes to understand that the Eloi and the Morlocks are a kind of parable of evolution at work: that the one had been the leisured classes or homo sapiens, that the other had been the oppressed workers, and that their current shape reflected the inevitable outcome of a process of natural selection. Eloi and Morlock have become figures who haunt our dreams of progress.

Even more haunting, however, is the conclusion of the Time Traveller's progress into the future. He comes at last to a time when the sun is swollen and red and gives off little heat. There seems to be no life left at all. He is on a sullen beach. A chill snow falls. 'From the edge of the sea came a ripple and whisper. Beyond these lifeless sounds the world was silent. Silent? It would be hard to convey the stillness of it. All the sounds of man, the bleating of sheep, the cries of birds, the hum of insects, the stir that makes the background of our lives – all that was over.' This is the myth of entropy. It has haunted the high technological parade of genre SF for nearly a century; and for many who do not read science fiction at all it has supplanted the Biblical extravaganza of the Book of Revelations with an even harsher doom.

For the next five years or so, Wells continued to generate stories which established paradigms for much of the genre SF to come. In *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), he modernized Frankenstein, substituting for the spatchcocked monster an array of deformed beings, creatures tortured into 'human' form by the doctor's efforts to control the shape of animal species through surgery; if genetic engineering had been dreamt of then, Dr Moreau would have been an explorer in that field, a field whose outcome will be more profoundly transformative than anything we have yet experienced. In *The Invisible Man* (1897) Wells put into definitive (but nightmarish) form the fable and the dream that being invisible might make one invincible. In *The War of the Worlds* (1898) he transformed the tedious future-war genre into full-blown science fiction, creating as he did so a vision of alien beings who are in no sense parodies of or commentaries on the human species, and also creating the solar system as a platform for realistic combat. Previous science fiction had tended to treat space as a backdrop; now, very suddenly, it was connected to the real world.

In *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899), Wells envisioned an urban dystopia whose nightmarish caverns and atriums prefigured the great dreamlike cityscapes of the century to come. And in *The First Men in the Moon* (1901), he caused human beings to traverse the realistic solar system he had envisioned, and to land on a realistically-conceived Moon, where they stumbled upon another alien species, the Selenites. Again, the Selenites are not simple parodies of the human species; Wells's description of them constitutes perhaps the first genuine attempt at visualizing the sociology of a culture intrinsically alien from our own.

The moment passed for Wells. Although he continued to write prolifically until his death in 1946, and although he published several science fiction novels of intermittent brilliance, from about the turn of the century Wells concentrated his astonishingly alert mind upon the problems humanity faced in the present and immediate future. His utopian solutions now seem naive and simple-minded in their dependence on scientific solutions for human dilemmas, but for many men and women still alive the twentieth century retains an essentially Wellsian coloration. And his presentations of the movement of science, his sense that the human race could sanitize itself into a better state of being, does colour as well the genre SF he created, and abandoned. But it does no more than provide an ambience.

Genre SF was never much interested in predictions, not much interested in the minutiae of social progress, not much interested in the intricacies of establishing a Wellsian World State to distribute justice and wealth across the planet. Genre SF had different goals, and awoke different dreams in its readers.

The Platform of the Future

What must be remembered are two things, the first that genre SF is set, almost invariably, in the future. Verne never moved conspicuously beyond the present day and, with the exceptions of *The Time Machine* and *When the Sleeper Wakes*, neither did Wells. But the genre SF which began in American pulp magazines around 1925 very soon discovered the platform of the future, and very soon some point in the future became the point at which any SF story began. Both of the novels by Wells which have future scenes begin with scenes placed in contemporary settings, and feature protagonists who travel (by Time Machine, or through suspended animation) into the future. The great technical innovation of genre SF was to eschew the bridge, and to liberate the tale from any too-pressing a relationship to the here and now.

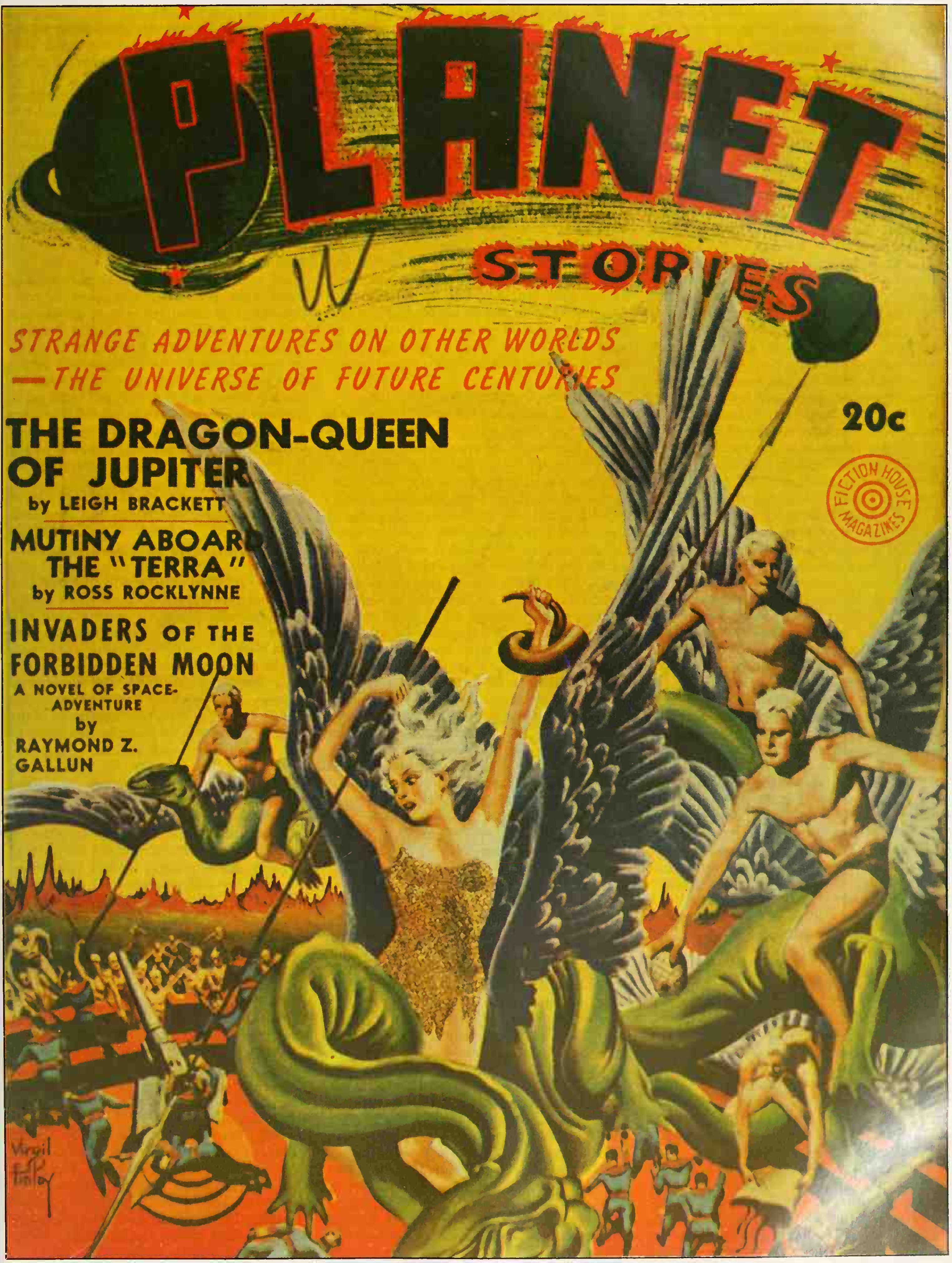
The effect was stunning. Tales that might previously be tied to the detail-work of history or mundane probabilities were now freed to explore visions of the universe and of human destiny without apologizing to the present. In other terms, genre SF constituted, in the absence of any super-ego, a series of libidinous explosions of the imagination. It is perhaps for this reason that so much badly written genre SF, featuring childish protagonists one wouldn't want to invite home for dinner, does have the power to evoke mythic longings in its readership. Genre SF gave a platform – the libidinous future – for the telling of 20th-century myth.

The second thing to remember is that genre SF was essentially American, and that the myth it embodied in thousands of stories and hundreds of novels, from 1925 until Sputnik marked the beginning of the end, was a myth of America. It may have been borrowed, but it was not blue. Though it imported its language and many of its favourite icons from Wells, American genre SF conspicuously failed to import either the Wellsian pessimism which gave so poignant a turn to his best work, or his sense that the 'muddle' of the world desperately needed working through.

For American genre SF, the muddle at the heart of things was a problem for the Old World to solve. The pessimistic Wellsian sense that history was difficult to triumph over, and that entropy would inevitably increase until the sun turned red and cold, simply did not much matter, once the future had been reached with a single bound.

The heart of the American dream in 1925 was almost precisely that. The future could be reached through an application of spunk and will and inventiveness. And there would be no side-effects worth measuring, no costs to drag the adventurers back to Earth. If to lovers of mythological analogues this sounds like a return to Eden, then they are almost certainly right. The Christian myth might move the faithful from the walled garden of Eden at the beginning of the world to the walled city of Jerusalem at the world's end, but for the American dreamer of 1925 – at that date he or she was unlikely to live in a city – there was no reason why the platform of the future should not be a Garden in the Wilderness. For Americans, Eden was a promised land whose location was easy to pin down: it was just beyond the Last Frontier that marked the furthest edge of the Territory. When Huck Finn, in Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), 'lights out for the Territory', he is taking the first step to Eden. And when Richard Seaton, the inventor-genius who explores the galaxy in E.E. Smith's *The Skylark of Space* (1928), finds a new planet to conquer, he is repeating Huck's triumphant leap into freedom.

'Strange adventures of other worlds – the universe of future centuries'; genre science fiction reached the future with a single bound, yet the fauna of early fantasy, particularly the mythic dragon, survived in many of these stories: cover from a popular magazine of futuristic fiction


PLANET
STORIES
STRANGE ADVENTURES ON OTHER WORLDS
—THE UNIVERSE OF FUTURE CENTURIES
20c
FICTION HOUSE MAGAZINES
THE DRAGON-QUEEN OF JUPITER
by LEIGH BRACKETT
MUTINY ABOARD THE "TERRA"
by ROSS ROCKLYNNE
INVADERS OF THE FORBIDDEN MOON
A NOVEL OF SPACE-ADVENTURE
by
RAYMOND Z. GALLUN
Virgil Finlay

So the American dream was of a future which could be reached by an act of gumption. And American genre SF, for half a century, recorded versions of that dream by recounting a thousand – ten thousand – brilliant exploits in the vast playground of the universe. Jack Williamson, Clifford D. Simak, L. Sprague de Camp, A.E. Van Vogt, Robert A. Heinlein, Isaac Asimov: even the best writers in the genre shared in the dream, though with reservations; their lesser co-workers had fewer scruples, and constructed innumerable cartoons of easy triumph, effortless (and significantly sexless) heroism.

It was (it could be suggested) heroism without any need to bring home the bacon; as though the Hero with the Thousand Faces had taken up the challenge and made the long journey and defeated the dark foe – and never come back. As a consequence, American genre SF never significantly addressed itself to the long hard task of constructing worlds in which human beings could live, once the heroic era had passed. It was myth without the shadow of death.

A similar thinning of the mythic texture had also been afflicting the larger field of fantasy, within which science fiction floated. The threatening and problematical nature of earlier fantasy, with its interrogation of the boundaries of perception and knowledge, did not long survive the invention – or perhaps recollection – of what might be called Faerie, or perhaps more accurately the Marvellous Landscape. The romances of William Morris, like *The Wood Beyond the World* (1894) and *The Well at the World's End* (1896), paved the way with their depiction of twilit but eternal lands, where high deeds and magic interwove poetic spells, and time could have a stop.

Lord Dunsany's early stories, and his later novel, *The King of Elfland's Daughter* (1924), strengthened the sense that it was possible to conceive of kingdoms ungoverned by time and science; and the astonishing Zimiamvian novels of E. R. Eddison, most notably *The Worm Ouroboros* (1922), added an erotic intensity to the mix. (Sexual material was avoided in most English-language fantasy before the twentieth century, except through subtexts, sometimes quite violently eroticized; and in American genre SF sex tended to be seen, with astonishing naivete, as a domesticating influence to be avoided by the valiant young hero).

The Rebirth of Fantasy

Most fantasy writing in the first half of the twentieth century was caught in whimsy, featuring (for instance) coy tales of gods and goddesses who visit the contemporary world incognito. It was not until the publication of what remains the greatest single High Fantasy novel – J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (3 volumes, 1954-1955) – that fantasy began to establish for itself an identifiable profile in the public mind.

This was not all to the good. Tolkien's long tale espoused a conservative, hieratic, moral vision of the universe, and terminated in a return to something like Eden, all these features being consistent with the author's own Catholicism, and his distaste for the twentieth century. Put together with patience and remarkable skill, and very cleverly told, *The Lord of the Rings* generated a huge fandom in the 1960s, and inspired a large number of other writers to emulate the form – but very rarely anything like the substance – of the great book. Without Tolkien's monomaniacal skill, his religious convictions and his hatreds, most of the imitations of his masterwork might be described as near-cynical hackwork written to fit a market slot.

Innumerable High Fantasy quest tales have seen print since 1965, a huge proportion of them featuring elves and dwarves and ill-tempered but essentially kindly wizards, and hidden kings and dark lords, and ending frequently in the restoration of a monarchy. Myth and magic, legend and lore and nostrum and panacea, are mentioned very often in these stories; but very rarely are they successfully evoked.

Working the Deeper Veins

Stephen Donaldson's *Covenant* trilogy is a partial exception, as are Peter S. Beagle's four interestingly various novels, and there are some other books of interest; but modern High Fantasy generally lacks conviction or anything resembling the dream-like intensity and mythopoeic presence of the masters. In recent years, however, some fantasy authors have begun, once again, to work the deeper veins. John Crowley's *Little, Big* (1981) sets a typically English Faerie enclave into an American wilderness, interrogates our mortal longings for eternal escape, and ends in a threnody for the thinning out of magic from the planet. Gene Wolfe's *The Book of the New Sun* (1980-1983), which can be just as easily read as science fiction, is set so far into the future that the artefacts of the 20th century have become embedded in the crust of the Earth, and can only be disinterred by geologists: we are the deep past of the future, and our lives are the tales they tell over the fire.

And Robert Holdstock's *Mythago Wood* (1984) engages with the Matter of Britain and the perils and allure of the Wild Wood. The Mythagoes themselves – physical creatures, jacks and Robin Hoods and knights and metamorphic monsters, all shaped by the mythopoeic dreams of human beings over aeons – are a deeply evocative concept. These fantasies are all set along the boundaries demarcating the mundane world from the Marvellous, which is perhaps natural enough, as stories and myths tend to cluster along lines of stress.

In the narrower and sharper world of genre SF, the last decades of the century have been quite disastrous. Sputnik did much to destroy the playground of space, because it was no longer possible to think that space was unconnected to the brutal, time-serving, bureaucratic, complicated world of the here and now. Neither the invention of the computer, nor the development of miniaturized electronics which has so revolutionized the contemporary world, were more than hinted at in genre SF, which had assiduously avoided describing futures too sophisticated to fit comfortably into the straightforward, outward-looking stories favoured by a young readership. Biological engineering, which is beginning to transform the world, was similarly avoided, as it cut very close to the bone of how we define what it means to be human.

Although sexual and cultural speculations and experiments were shaking real-life America, in genre SF the nuclear family, with Dad in the dominant role, remained the normative version of how human beings would consort together over the next several thousand years. The death of American genre SF seemed inevitable for decades, and by 1975 or so a death had indeed occurred.

Myths for the New World

What remains is a strange combination of ingredients. Technically moribund but commercially successful, genre SF continues as a consumer product, and in the form of immensely successful movies; but dreams no new dreams for us to shape into myths for a new age. On the other hand, what we can no longer call genre SF does still exist; perhaps we should simply return to calling it science fiction. Some of the finest novelists who began in the 1950s or 1960s, like Philip K. Dick, Robert Silverberg, Ursula K. Le Guin, Thomas M. Disch, Samuel R. Delany, Roger Zelazny or Gene Wolfe, may have started as genre SF writers, but soon emigrated from the restrictive compound of the old genre, and began to create mythic structures for the new world. It is not yet possible to say whose stories will be retold in a hundred years, but Dick's fables of reality slippage will probably survive, as will Wolfe's fables of transformation and religious revival.

Still newer writers have yet to implant their iconographies deep into the human psyche. But John Varley's *Steel Beach* (1992) – the title hints that at the end of the century we are like lungfish learning to breathe in a harsh new universe – may survive as an abiding image. William Gibson, in *Neuromancer* (1984), creates an instant myth in the form of Cyberpunk. And Michael Swanwick, in *Stations of the Tide* (1991), treats virtual reality as an ultimate realization of the Renaissance Art of Memory. None of these writers tells of triumphs of the will; perhaps the time for easy victories has passed forever. What they do say is that we remain capable of dreaming; that from our dreams we fabricate stories that live; that if our stories live, we live.

JOHN CLUTE

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